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LADY JULIETTE'S SECRET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Grand Court," "The Rose of Kemdale," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XI.

I know a maiden, fair to see,

Take care! She can both false and friendly be,

Beware!

Trust her not, she is fooling thee.

Longfellow.

LEANING over the gate, looking into the corn-fields, behind them the burning house and the crowd watching it; above them the lurid sky, where night was passing away, with all her weird fantastic shadows following fast in her sombre train, and day was rising, chill, gray, and colourless as a timid maiden's first love—Nancy Symes, in her plain peasant dress, her hair put up under her white cap, her pale spiritual face turned towards the dawn in the east; Eugene in his careless, picturesque garb, half sportsmanlike, half artistic, his handsome head leaning pensively in his hand.

Thus these two stood in silence for a space between the day and night—both full of thought; one with his proud heart and all his pulses vibrating to the chords which Love had just sounded on his immortal harp—the other, looking, in her pure and elevated faith, for something infinitely higher than this poor fleeting, fading life can offer. They were an interesting study for painter or poet, at that moment.

"A secret regarding the Lady Juliette?" said Fernandez.

He spoke in a hoarse whisper, and there was such a breathless anxiety in his tone that Nancy looked at him with her large serious eyes, in a sort of wonder.

"It is only a secret which concerns herself and her destinies," said Nancy, slowly; "it cannot matter to you or to me; and it will not be a secret long, I suppose, for there will be village treats, school-fests, children to strew the roads with flowers, triumphal arches, clashing out of church bells—all the merry-making attendant upon an English country wedding. Lady Juliette is going to be married!"

Fernandez stood cold and dumb for a time, and Nancy knew nothing of what was passing in that fiery soul. He had only seen and spoken with the high-born beauty once; he knew that she looked on him with the same kindly, pitying eye with which she regarded the village peasant lady, or the servants in the lordly mansion wherein she dwelt. What eyes they were of hers, by the way! How they haunted him, with their searching gaze—sad, earnest, tender, in colour deeply blue, and shaded always by that lovely fringe of silken eyelash! He knew that the feeling of wild, bitter pain which made him feel savage and reckless, was a feeling which he had not the smallest right to entertain; and yet, there it was, crushing down upon his heart, like a weight of iron, stinging his soul, heating his blood, filling him with mad and angry fancies.

"Whom is the Lady Juliette about to marry?" he enquired at length.

"An old baronet, and the richest merchant in London, Sir Guildford Owen."

"Yes, Sir Guildford is fifty-eight, stout and florid and gouty. It seems a pity in some sense that youth and loveliness should be sold into bondage to age; and this is not a white-haired sire, whose children rise up and call him blessed; but a city magnate, who loves mock turtle and ortolans, an old gentleman who had a wife many years ago, a poor pale lady, who died, and left an infant son; that child was afterwards drowned while his nurse was bathing him in the sea, and Sir Guildford was inconsolable. Some long time ago, twelve years perhaps, when the earl, Lady Juliette's father, died, it turned out that the rich merchant had lent so much money to the embarrassed earl that the nobleman could not repay him except by entering into a contract with Sir Guildford, then a man of forty-six years old, that his infant daughter should, on attaining the age of eighteen, give her hand in marriage to the baronet. You see the baronet's family is not noble—has not one drop of other than merchant's blood in any branch of the family tree, and the honour of wedding with the noble

Cadettes was a precious boon in the eyes of the pompous city man. Lady Juliette would be nearly penniless did she remain unwed, for a quantity of money and valuable papers mysteriously disappeared after the earl's death. Colonel Philbertson and his brother were appointed trustees and guardians, and the Lady Juliette was educated at Maberly, in the full belief that she must marry Sir Guildford Owen. You know the Cadettes came originally from princely Spanish blood, and the Norman stream mingles in with it. Patrician from generation to generation, without one blot on her escutcheon, without one scandalous story in all the archives of her noble house, sweet Juliette will be given into the hands of the merchant prince, like a stainless lily, to decorate his gilded home. It is a strange story methinks, and a sad,"—and here the carpenter's niece leant her elbow on the gate, and rested her round white chin in a musing attitude in her hand, and stood silent.

"And what does the Lady Juliette say to this strange trafficking, this exchange, which savours to me of the Turkish slave market?" asked Fernandez passionately, having shrugged his shoulders, an action expressive of his foreign training.

"I know not," she said sadly. "She has been taught probably that wealth is the one thing needful to crown her beauty. She will have heard this from her nursery days, and have grown quite accustomed to the idea. She knows her family is impoverished, and it must rest with her by making this wealthy marriage, to raise it up once more; so she will sacrifice herself, doubtless, to that end."

"It is simply atrocious," said Fernandez, hoarsely. "It is one of the most wicked marriages I ever heard of; it seems like the story of some infamous baron of the middle ages, not like a tale of this prosaic nineteenth century life. Is it true?"

"Quite true," replied Nancy, quietly. "And now, Mr. Fernandez, I will wish you good-bye for the present. My uncle is a great invalid, and he may need my services; what I have told you is a secret, and no secret. Everybody in Altonby knows something of the Lady Juliette's approaching wedding. The news seems to have made you thoughtful."

Fernandez clasped Nancy's hands in both his own, and then stood watching the slight figure as it glided away in the struggling beams of the sinking moon, and rising day.

He turned towards his home with his heart in a ferment, and his brain in a whirl.

Going to be married! That pensive, dark-haired beauty, with the Grecian face, and pure, fair, tinting, and earnest star-like eyes.

How did he dare, he asked of himself, savagely, how did he dare to think of her as he was thinking, with passionate yearning tenderness, with wild rapture, while he dwelt upon her loveliness, her grace, her stately bearing, her maiden pride? And she was to be given over like a Turkish bond-slave into the hands of a master, a stout, red-faced personage, jealous, probably, since he would not be a fitting partner for youth and grace.

"Oh! Sir Guildford Owen, I could hurl you down to Hades," cried the passionate young man.

He arrived at Allonby, entered Honeysuckle Cottage with his latch-key, mounted the stairs, and crept to bed.

He slept, in spite of the distracting thoughts which filled his brain, for intense fatigue held down his eyelids with a leaden weight.

When he awakened it was in consequence of somebody shaking his arm very energetically.

"Mr. Fennand! Mr. Fennand!" said the cracked voice of his old landlady, for she never could pronounce the name properly, "rouse up, rouse up, sir, if you please, the bell's gone nine, and the boys have got down to the school, and the vicar is here so cross."

The young man leaped out of bed, and began to dress with all despatch.

His hasty ablutions complete, his short dark hair brushed into place, he ran down into the sitting-room, where the pompous Mr. Upperton sat looking like a judge about to pronounce sentence of penal servitude for life upon some wretched culprit.

"Fernandez," said the vicar, striking the table with his open palm, "this won't do."

"Sir," replied the young man, "it has never occurred before and it shall never occur again. I was out last night."

"Silence, sir, if you please," cried the tyrannical vicar. "I believe I have some sort of right to coerce you. I believe that but for me you would have been starving. I rescued you from misery, I brought you home, I placed you in a position where you are enabled to earn your bread. I simply require the first duty of the young towards the elderly, of the poor towards their betters, of the people towards their masters—obedience. I make a law that the school commences at nine; it is more than half-past nine; and had not your landlady roused you, you would have been sleeping now."

This tone of the vicar's was the harder to bear since the old landlady was listening at the half-open door.

Fernandez felt more incensed than he had ever felt since his arrival in England. His blood seemed to seethe in his veins; he became white with a suppressed fury; but he had still command enough left to remain quiet until the vicar had ceased. Then he said:

"I was at the fire at Marston Moor last night, and I was fortunate enough to save the lives of several persons. I returned late and most terribly fatigued. I overlept myself."

The vicar looked gloomily at his young subordinate. He was now beginning to hate him for his calm self-possession and dauntless bearing. To conquer or crush that proud spirit was henceforth the aim of the pompous clergyman. He fancied he was acting from a sense of duty, whereas, in truth, he was only obeying the promptings of a proud and tyrannical heart.

"Your duty, sir," said the vicar, "is not to play the hero of romance by going about to rescue victims from the flames, but to keep those regular hours which will enable you to attend to your duties, and observe punctually the rules which I have set down for you."

"Then you think it would have been better that those children should have been burnt to death last night, than that the Allonby children should have to wait half-an-hour beyond their time in the school-room, Mr. Upperton?"

"Sir, you are insolent—unbearably insolent!" cried the vicar. "Thank Heaven, the Giles are saved; but that fact does not exonerate you from a faithful and punctual performance of your duty. Now, sir, put on your hat, and follow me down to the school."

"Mr. Upperton," exclaimed Fernandez, in a voice hoarse with rage, "how much do you expect me to bear? Our compact cannot be expected to hold me here as your bond-slave, whom you may insult at your leisure. Allow me to give you notice that I leave you at the autumn quarter."

The vicar stared aghast.

"Sir, sir," he said, "you amaze me. This is contrary to English law. Either you stay your three years, or you pay a fine of forty pounds, or you go to prison."

"Surely your English law would listen to my side of the argument," cried Fernandez, passionately; "surely I am not expected to remain in slavery."

"Silence, sir," cried the vicar, raising his voice angrily; "I tell you the law will be very severe towards you. I tell you to remember that you have not a friend in the world except me; and if I turn against you you are ruined. I shall not pay one farthing of the next quarter, and how will you pay your butcher and baker? You are in my service, and I tell you, sir, I will have obedience to authority; I will be obeyed."

Fernandez's eyes blazed with an unholy light. At that moment he was mad, furious, savage, and impelled towards evil. He even raised his hand and made a step in the direction of the door, when a light footfall sounded in the passage outside. Another moment, and Miss Random, in the freshest of white muslin trimmed with mauve ribbons, tripped into the room, her yellow hair hanging down low on her shoulders, a large straw hat shading her fair, coquettish face.

"Ah, Mr. Upperton," she cried, "good morning. What a lovely morning! Have you heard of the fire, and this brave young knight errant? Mr. Fernandez, you will win all ladies' hearts when the gallant deed is noised abroad; will he not, Mr. Upperton?"

The vicar looked confused, and he wiped his hot, red face with his handkerchief.

Fernandez smiled a grim smile, and bowed.

There was something so mocking in the tone of the coquettish Florence, that he could not trust himself to thank her for her polite and flattering compliments. He feared in his then frame of mind that he might allow the burning sarcasm which swelled in his heart, and flashed like barbed lightning shafts through his brain, to take a form of words which would not be polite, conventional, or courteous.

Florence looked in surprise at the two gloomy faces. She was, of course, far too well-bred to comment upon the agitation which she witnessed.

"I heard such a glowing account of the courage and presence of mind of this young man," she said, toying with her pen and walking to the window, "that I could not resist running in to compliment him on his bravery; but I will not intrude any longer at present, only I must tell you, Mr. Fernandez, that Lady Juliette and myself really do desire to take lessons in Spanish, and we should like to begin at once. We shall not have very much to amuse us until the influx of visitors next month comes. When can we begin, and what are your terms?"

The vicar frowned an ugly frown, and made a sign to Florence that he wished her to retract her resolution. That undaunted young lady however was not to be driven back from any scheme or project which she had once formed by the frowns of a florid, pompous, middle-aged gentleman like the vicar—in fact, seeing that he disapproved of her plan, she was all the more determined to put it into practice.

"Now, we should like to begin this very afternoon," said Florence, gaily. "I should say after the school, from half-past four till half-past six, would give us plenty of time to take our lessons. Now, will you be punctual this afternoon? And will you tell me the terms? A pound a week for a lesson every day, will that suit? We are not very rich damsels either of us."

"The terms I consider most liberal," stammered Fernandez, "and I shall be only too happy."

The vicar rose to his feet.

"Well, Mr. Fernandez," he said, severely, "you seem to forget that you will be an hour after your time at the school-room."

The incorrigible Florence clapped her hands.

"Delightful," she said. "I like unpunctual people. I am sure Mr. Fernandez will be a tremendous favourite of mine, then. We may expect you, Mr. Fernandez?"

Fernandez bowed deeply, and followed the vicar out of the room.

Florence accompanied them into the lane, and then retreated, waving her gloved hand, smiling, coquetting, beaming all over with graces and airs and fascinations.

"Mr. Fernandez," broke forth the vicar, when they were alone, "I warn you that you must never step beyond the bounds of your subordinate position during your absurd and ridiculous relations with those two high-born ladies. If you presume by the eighth part of an inch on Miss Random's apparent condescension, she would call in the servants and turn you out of the house."

Fernandez was proud and sensitive enough to feel stung to the quick by this insult, but he restrained his anger, saying simply:

"I trust I know what is due to ladies of Miss Random's rank."

"And, sir," continued the vicar, "let me hear no more of this impudent nonsense about throwing up your position and subjecting yourself to a prosecution, for I tell you, upon principle, I should prosecute you if there were any chance of your failing in your agreement."

"I will remain, Mr. Upperton," replied the young man, in a low tone.

The fact was that the prospect of meeting Lady Juliette had nearly made the impulsive Fernandez frantic with joy; all anger, all animosity, all dreams of foiled ambition, all bitter regrets for wasted years paled into insignificance before the blazing light which hope and love had kindled in his soul. He was to meet the priceless, peerless Juliette, with her pearl-like complexion and calm Greek face and far-seeing blue eyes—a creature to warm a painter's soul, and inspire, inflame, raise to ecstasy a poet's fancy.

This down-trodden, poverty-stricken young man was both poet and painter, a highly-gifted being. He looked down upon the grass and smiled, while the proxy pompous vicar continued to utter phrase after phrase touching the duty of subordination, the relative positions of employers and employed, the sine of the lower classes and the virtues of the upper, the virtue ever increasing as we ascend higher and higher in the social scale.

All this unjust talk fell harmlessly upon the ears of Fernandez, who smiled down upon the green-ward, dreaming of Juliette.

Arrived at the school, the vicar took his leave, and the business of life commenced for Fernandez. He conducted the morning lessons, retired to his lodgings, partook of a frugal meal, returned to the school, went through the usual routine, and afterwards went home once more, where he spent some time over his toilette. He knew nothing of what was fashionable or unfashionable to wear in the afternoon and in the presence of ladies, but he dressed himself with an artistic simplicity in a black velvet coat and crimson tie which set off the style of his varnished, foreign type of manly beauty.

There is no denying that the Spanish school-master was a splendid-looking young man—Erect, lithe of limb, moulded like a Grecian athlete, and with a noble head, at once youthful, graceful, and full of intellectual power.

He arrived at the Abbey, and lingered a moment on the flowered terrace, watching the stately sailing of the snow-white swans upon the placid waters of the Italian fountain, with the basin of gold-coloured marble. There was an atmosphere about the flowering shrubs which intoxicated the young Spaniard. He knew that he stood on the portals of an enchanted palace, that Syrens, golden-haired and silver-voiced, were waiting for him within—Syrens who might well fire his soul and intoxicate his senses. He might be going straight down the path to destruction for aught he could tell to the contrary, but Lady Juliette dwelt within that mansion, and he entered it.

The splendid hall which we have described before was a feast to his artistic eyes. He gazed on it as one gazes in a dream.

A footman led him into a room carpeted with what seemed like the richest velvet; the ground was of a golden brown, and large green fern leaves seemed to grow almost out of the thick Persian pile. The chairs and couches were of green satin, flowered with gold; a curtain of the same, heavily fringed with gold, was partly undrawn, and showed glimpses of a conservatory filled with exotic flowers. There was a bookcase of green enamel in this room, and some hundreds of volumes all bound alike, either in dark crimson or golden brown, showed the taste in assimilating colours which characterised the fastidious master of Maberly Abbey. There were a few statues and paintings in this room, all of them exquisitely rich in colour, voluptuous in a strictly artistic sense, glowing bright from some gifted painter's enthusiastic fancy, and dainty, yet energetic fingers—warm pictures of Grecian nymphs, syrian glades, where huntmen and hounds went down among the forest dells. Everything in that room was eloquent of summer, and love, and beauty, and yet all was chaste, refined to that highest point where civilization just borders upon voluptuousness.

Fernandez sighed a sigh of mingled anxiety and satisfaction. Then two silvery voices chanting in concert broke upon his ear.

Another moment, and from behind the green satin curtain came forward two beautiful creatures, arm-in-arm.

They ceased singing when they perceived him. Miss Random condescended to extend her hand in friendly greeting, but Lady Juliette, stately as a proud garden lily, only bowed—a bow which the young man thought haughty, and which caused his proud, fiery, sensitive nature to shrink within itself.

Lady Juliette wore a purple silk skirt, with black lace over it. She was fond of black lace. Her dark hair had no other ornament than a single white rose. She wore a diamond brooch. He could see the pearly gleaming of the round white arms through the black lace sleeves.

Florence was brightly dressed in blue and white silk, under skirt of blue, upper one of white.

The two ladies were in dinner dress; the lesson was to last till half-past six, and usually the dinner hour at Maberley was seven o'clock.

Florence took the initiative for Mr. Fernandez. "We have Spanish books," she said, approaching the enamelled bookcase, "and you must have patience with us and take compassion on our ignorance."

They offered a marked and yet lovely contrast, those two—Lady Juliette, slight, graceful, stately, silent; Miss Random, loud, talkative, coquettish, showing off her airs and graces, and trying to win the heart of the young tutor that she might break it.

We cannot tell the reader all that the lesson contained, suffice it that Fernandez was an excellent teacher, and Juliette an assiduous pupil. She appeared really anxious to learn Spanish, and nothing else.

But the restless Florence kept up a constant fire of small talk, which distracted, perplexed, and yet amused Fernandez in spite of himself.

The hour of departure arrived. Fernandez arose, bowed, the footman conducted him to the hall, and he found his way into the park. He drew his hat over his eyes, folded his arms across his chest, and walked along musingly.

"Cold, cold as ice," said the schoolmaster; "proud, proud as Lucifer, beautiful as a dream of Heaven, or a Hourii from the 'Loves of the Angels.' I wonder where this madness will lead me to, and whether I can ever banish that face again from me?"

CHAPTER XII.

So sings the winter wind—
Gouty age, with crippled gait,
Youth, a slender and elate,
Cannot wed a holy wedding.
So sings the winter wind—
Youth goes dancing through the glade,
Age dies a grave with heavy spade;
Of bitter tears there is much shedding.
So sings the winter wind. Old Ballad.

Miss Random and Lady Juliette remained alone in the exquisite little boudoir library. Florence threw herself upon one of the rich satin couches, clasped her hands and broke into a silvery laugh.

"What an admirable game this promises to be," cried the coquette. "That dark-eyed Spaniard, who reminds me of one of Victor Hugo's heroes, is either hopelessly in love with you or with me, or else he will shortly become so. We shall have a terrific scene here one of these days. He will write a letter in his blood, and send it to me—or perhaps it may be to you—and then we shall have him shooting himself through the heart in some romantic and tragical manner."

Juliette raised her blue eyes in wonder, and looked enquiringly at her friend.

"Do you mean that, Florence?" she asked.

"Certainly, *ma chère*," replied Miss Random, stifling a pretty little yawn, which disclosed her white small teeth, and pucker up her rose leaf cheeks for an instant. "What better amusement could this dull country life afford than the spectacle of a handsome young upstart, who thinks himself a hero because he has dark eyes, paints in oil, and speaks foreign tongues, going as mad as they do on the stage, for the sake of a high-born and beautiful woman of the world, who merely patronises his talents from the purest philanthropic motives?"

Florence spoke in a mimicking tone. She continued:

"One is amazed beyond conception at his folly and his presumption. Can there be a better spectacle I ask than the utter failure of this upstart, his disgrace, blind fury, and self-inflicted death!" and the laughter of Florence rang through the room like the peal of a silver bell.

"I do not believe you really are so heartless and wicked, Florence, or I would refuse to regard you as my friend," said Lady Juliette in her quiet dulcet tones. All this while she had been putting back the books into the enamelled book-case, her sweet, serious face calm as its wont.

Florence looked at her curiously.

"What ails you little one?" she asked kindly and suddenly. "Are you ill?" are you sad? Tell me, has anything happened to distress you? I am all anxious to learn."

Juliette came and stood by the side of her friend, and took her hand between both of her own.

"The colonel has appointed nine o'clock for me to meet him in the large library this evening. I dread what is coming."

Florence glanced up at her quickly.

"You fear that he means to talk about the earl's will and the betrothal, and the bridegroom elect?"

Lady Juliette bowed her head in acquiescence, but she remained silent, and her pale cheek grew paler.

"You do not wish to marry Sir Guildford Owen, Bart., lady fair, do you?" asked Florence quickly.

"I have a repugnance to the thought of marriage with anybody," replied the singular and beautiful girl, speaking in her grave, quiet tones. "I have wished always for four boons."

"Four?" cried the lively Florence, "that's unfortunate, because, Juliette, when folks put on the wishing cap, they have only permission to wish three times. Now, there might have been a nice chance of three wishes—but for four! Still, tell me what they are, will you? and I will try and find out if there is any chance of your obtaining what you want."

"First of all, I wish for wisdom."

"Copy the owl," cried the sippant Florence. "Sit on the branch of a yew tree in the summer night, and complain to the moon."

"The mooping owl
Doth to the moon complain,
Of such as wandering near her secret bower
Molest her ancient, solitary reign."

"See how poetical I am; that's from 'Grey's Elegy,' is it not?"

"You mock me," said Juliette, sadly, "but I will not follow the example of the bird of wisdom, although I so desire to be wise. I will not complain, either to the moon, which would be useless, or to my lively friend, Miss Random, who makes game of my anxieties."

"Now she is growing severe," said Florence, speaking as if to herself; "so I must even repress my exuberant flow of spirits, and restrain that unruly member, the tongue. Well, Juliette, you desire wisdom—that's one boon. Now for the second."

"Health, perfect health," said Juliette, "so that I may be able to labour in some way for the good of others."

Florence made a grimace.

"Become a sister of mercy, my dear," she said, "and cut off the long, flowing dark hair, and wear a hideous coal-scuttle on your head, and carry about bread, and meat, and worsted stockings in a little basket."

"No," said Juliette, quietly, "I have my weaknesses, Florence, and one is for elegant and beautiful clothing. I do not like the nun's dress. I could find a larger sphere of usefulness in some other mode of life."

"How seriously the little Puritan takes it all," said Florence, gaily. "Well, you want to be wise and useful, but you won't mope in an ivy tower, and you won't become a sister of mercy. You desire health, wisdom; there are two boons. What are the others?"

"Wealth," replied Juliette, and the dark blue eyes flashed, while a bright colour flooded the fair exquisite face. "Wealth, because wealth is power, and without it the wisdom of the wise is of small avail in this mercenary world, where man, woman, and children worship the golden calf from the very first day in the year to the last, all through the centuries. I desire wealth, and alas! my father left me only one hundred a year, an empty-sounding title, and an independent and proud spirit. I am very poor; I have hardly enough money to dress myself even as a Lady Juliette Cadette should be dressed."

"Well, but is it not left in your father's will that you are to marry Sir Guildford Owen, the richest merchant prince in England? So there you are with three of your wishes granted. You are in the enjoyment of pure and perfect health—you are dowered with wisdom far beyond your years, and as Lady Owen you will be the richest woman in England! But what is the fourth boon you wish for?"

"Liberty!" said Juliette, in a clear, bell-like voice. "Liberty to go about the world unquestioned—giving account for my actions to none, save Heaven and that sentinel which He has placed over all our hearts, and conscience! I tell you, Florence," and Lady Juliette's voice trembled; "I tell you that I crave liberty more than any other boon; I do not wish to become the pampered, gilded slave of Sir Guildford Owen. Still," continued this extraordinary and beautiful young patrician, and she clasped her white hands and looked steadily at her friend; "I have not made up my mind to refuse Sir Guildford—not yet—for it is probable that he will be generous and suffer me to enjoy liberty. I will found schools and institutes; I will go about and endow hospitals; I will spend my time in relieving the wretched—but not while wearing a scuttie bonnet and a black, ugly garb. No; I will dress gracefully, and sit in a magnificent carriage; and I will roll in this carriage through the most squalid streets, where misery stalks in com-

pany with crime. I will raise the fallen, strengthen the weak—do good in my generation—but my own surroundings must be beautiful—the love of the beautiful is so strong in me."

Florence gazed at beautiful Juliette in a sort of amazement.

"I think you are the most extraordinary girl in the whole world," she said. "Then have you no religion, no thirst for conquest—no desire to go to court—to dance and dine with the bravest men and the fairest women in the aristocratic world, as your wealth and position will entitle you to do?"

"Ah, yes," said Juliette, with a smile, "I love opera and fêtes, and all that art and luxury have given to these latter times. I have fine tastes, as you call them, but my deeper feelings are all interested in the desire of humanity itself to do good; that is the passion of my life, and to effect this I must have wisdom, health, wealth and liberty. Oh, would that I were a great, great heiress," continued the exquisite enthusiast, passionately; "then I would never, never marry!"

"Juliette, my dear," said Florence, in a matter-of-fact tone, "people would think you half wild, if they heard you talk in this strain." Florence went on again: "Then you have never had any thoughts of falling in love, my dear little romancer?"

Juliette shook her head.

"From my earliest childhood I have been taught by Colonel Philbertson, Mrs. Philbertson, and all the governesses and friends I have ever had, that my husband was to be a stout elderly man, older than papa. Of course, since I was fourteen or fifteen—even before that age, in fact, I think at eleven or twelve years old, for I have always been a thoughtful, reasoning creature—I have understood that it would be impossible for me to love this man as girls love in poems and stories; while to love another man would upset my father's will and displease my guardian. Therefore I have schooled myself to do without that lover's love, about which novel writers make so much fuss. I am—I say it calmly—quite raised above those weak and frivolous sentiments. If I do not marry Sir Guildford, it will be because I cannot respect him as I wish to respect the person I marry, because he refuses to allow me liberty."

At this moment the deep boom of the dinner gong sounded through the house, and Florence exclaimed: "Delightful sound, expressive of all the delicious viands which can wait upon a healthy and eager appetite—like mine. Come along, I am ravenous—ambition, philanthropy, romance, coquetry, I cast ye all to the four winds, for the dinner gong has sounded."

So saying Florence rose, and drawing the arm of Juliette within her own, led the way to the dining-room. It was by this time all in a glow of rich, subdued light. Livered servants were in attendance, gold and silver plate glittered on the sideboard. The odour of the viands was appetising: there was the sound of the drawing of corks and the flowing of wine.

Mrs. Philbertson wore green satin and heavy emerald ornaments. She was a blonde, handsome, haughty-looking dame, who seemed cold and apathetic; but those who knew her well, and had once seen the colonel's wife roused to wrath, were not likely to trust to the seeming calm of the lady's mien.

Juliette had seen her adopted mamma thus roused once or twice.

The colonel was present, and lastly Mr. Mapleton, the black-bearded, strongly-built man, whom we have seen under two such widely different social aspects during the course of this story. He bowed to Florence and extended his hand.

Miss Random appeared not to see the movement, but she smiled graciously and brightly, and inquired pleasantly whether Mr. Mapleton had enjoyed his first day at Maberley.

Then the whole party sat down to dinner, and the repast was partaken of in a solemn and stately fashion.

Mapleton devoted himself to Miss Random. His efforts to attract the brilliant belle met with a complete annihilating disdain, and yet it was such a polished scorn, so polite a sarcasm! The efforts of his wit turned backwards upon himself like arrows glancing from a wall of burnished steel.

At length the ladies rose to retire. Mapleton held the door for them to pass out. As Florence went by, she met a certain fiery glance from those deep-set, black eyes which startled her out of the calm of her usual self-possessed, well-bred insolence.

"Good Heavens, Juliette!" she said to her friend, as they passed arm-in-arm up the great staircase, "Do you know where I have met that man before? It is the tramp who frightened us to death when the carriage-wheel broke, and we were left in the lane twelve miles from here."

"Impossible!" cried Juliette. "And yet, now I think of it—"

She put her hand to her brow and started violently. Certainly, this man called Mapleton, who appeared so suddenly at Maberly, this new and mysterious acquaintance of the colonel, about whom Mrs. Philbertson knew nothing, and whom the master of the mansion merely mentioned casually as an "old friend whom he had known in India," certainly she had seen him before. She had always felt that, and now that Florence called it again to her mind, she knew where it was and all the circumstances. She soon remembered, as distinctly as Florence herself, that cunning face, coarse and ugly, those leering eyes, that black beard—why, the creature had not even taken the trouble to shave or alter his beard; and then she fancied she had noticed a defiant, sneering expression, which had rather courted recognition, and rejoiced in the perplexity and terror which the ladies might be supposed to manifest when they should discover the identity of the gentleman visitor with the ruffianly robber.

Neither of the young ladies judged it wise to allude to the subject in the presence of Mrs. Philbertson, but each of them felt that there were mystery and hidden guilt in this secret.

Juliette went and sat at an open window which looked over the flower garden towards the wooded glades in the park. And now, in the faint summer moonbeams, the whole country looked like some divine landscape seen in a dream.

There was only one lamp lighted, and that cast a dim radiance over the vast and splendid drawing-room. Glistening statuette and satin curtain, glistening mirror and gold inlaid furniture, all showed indistinctly in the grand but somewhat gloomy apartment.

Mrs. Philbertson slept on a low, luxurious couch. Florence went to the piano, and began to play a weird, brilliant fantasia; not a loud, clamorous *morceau*, but a fantastic melody, like dance music for the revels of elfins or the gambols of witches.

Juliette, looking out upon the moonlit country, and listening to the unearthly strains which seemed composed by some denizen of spirit land, fell into a reverie which speedily became a memory. That dark face of Mapleton—where had she seen it before? In what far off region of childhood? Ah, she remembered now. She had been travelling it seemed for days and days along a wild country, where stunted olives grew at the side of the mountain road. She was in a large carriage with some one who wore a great cloak trimmed with fur. It did not seem like summer weather, neither was it winter. It was not the climate of England; it was hardly like that of France or Italy—surely some wild, remote land whither she had never returned since those days of infancy! The man in the furred cloak wore a heavy beard, his voice was gentle, his arms were folded lovingly about her, and his name was papa. How distinctly she remembered that!

When she was hungry or thirsty he drew out cakes, bread, fruit, wine, or milk, from a large sack which hung in the carriage.

She loved this papa very much; she knew that. It seemed one night that she was carried into a large house, full of lights and clamour. There was music, there were the sounds of many voices speaking many different languages. She was taken into a room, and she heard a man say in French that there was "only one room to be had, the inn was so full." Papa placed her on his knees, and gave her milk and fruit and bread, and after that a little sweet, strong wine, for she was cold; and she was placed on a sofa (there was no bed), and covered with a cloak, and so she fell asleep until the loud noise of voices awoke her. She did not cry. She hardly knew why, but she was afraid.

Papa sat before the table, and there was a great heap of money in front of him. He was rubbing his hands together and tears were coursing down his cheeks. Opposite to him sat a man whose face she could not see, but at the side was another man. Ah, she remembered now the deeply sunken eyes and the savage mouth. She had never really forgotten them since that terrible night, for most terrible, most tragic she felt that night had been. She heard papa say:

"I shall go to my tomb a sinner. I shall see his eyes always!"

"Then," said Blackbeard, for so she named him in her childish terror, "you shall have as much as you see there for as long as you live, and all you have to do is to hold silence. 'A still tongue makes a wise head'—and a full purse. Be wise. You could not save him now if you would; and as for your child, she shall enjoy the full benefit of the earl's will, whatever it may be. Think what a benefit for her."

Then papa covered his eyes with his hands, and sobbed.

"My child, my little one that loves me so; she will go from me and never see me more."

Hearing that, she had risen up, stretched out her baby hands, and cried:

"Papa! Papa!"

Whereupon the man with the black beard had rushed savagely towards her, had raised her all screaming and struggling in his arms. After that she was passed to her father, and carried out upon a stone terrace where the moon was beaming. A sombre and gloomy lake washed the shores of this terrace; great mountains reared themselves round about the inn. What district it was she could not now determine. She had never seen anything like it since in England, France, or Italy.

She fell asleep upon the shoulder of the man whom she called papa. When she awakened again she was in a carriage that was moving rapidly. She looked about wildly for her father, but there were seated with her only strangers. Her wild, piteous cries, her desperate entreaties, her frenzied inquiries after her father were all of no avail.

From that day to this, a period of some fifteen years, she had never looked upon his face, or heard his voice again.

She had been taken into cities, been received in fine houses, been tenderly nurtured by female hands. Change, and kindness, and amusements, had gradually weaned her infant mind from dwelling on the past—a pall had fallen, as it were, between her and the memory of that mysterious night.

She had forgotten everything. She was the Lady Juliette, pampered and caressed. Her childhood and youth had been pleasantly and happily passed, although there were certain conditions connected with her future and linked in with her past which caused embarrassment and gloom occasionally to weigh down her spirits and cloud her brow.

She had heard that her father had died in London, greatly involved. He had left her a great deal of property notwithstanding; but this had mysteriously disappeared. No account remained of it; the title-deeds and all were gone. There was a hundred a-year left for her education, and there was a will consigning her at the age of nineteen to Sir Guildford Owen, Bart.

He was a merchant prince of enormous wealth. The noblest blood of England and Spain mingled in her veins. She could count titled dames and coronetted earls as cousins by the dozen. She was beautiful, highly gifted, highly cultivated; and although she was poor she was a noble prize in herself.

She was eighteen, and Sir Guildford Owen was fifty-six, and still she was not prejudiced against the marriage as yet—her character was as peculiar as her face was beautiful, and she had made up her mind to marry Sir Guildford, provided she could respect him, and if he gave her as much liberty to carry out her favourite schemes as she desired. But meanwhile strange, wild doubts had risen up in her heart. Who was that strange papa whom she had never seen since that mysterious night? If she talked about it now, they would tell her she had been dreaming—that sudden unfolding of the scroll which memory had held hidden from her for so long, that scroll whereon she read the past as vividly as though it had been enacted that very hour, showed her her heart, and awakened strange questions in her soul.

"I must find out the secret," said Juliette.

Then she arose, lighted a lamp, crossed the room, and went to a recess where over a cabinet hung a likeness of the late earl in a frame.

She raised the light and scrutinised the face curiously. Was it a likeness of that same papa from whom she had parted in the olive country fifteen years before? Alas! that papa had a black beard, large mild eyes, dark hair. "The earl was fair to see," with a bloom on his cheek, a blonde moustache, blue eyes, auburn hair, an expression gay and debonnaire.

Juliette turned away utterly astonished, and a dim and awful wonder filled her whole soul. At that moment a servant entered, and informed her that the colonel was waiting for her in the library.

Juliette descended the wide staircase, crossed the hall, and entered the room. A lamp burned on the table; the colonel sat in an arm-chair. He raised his hand as Juliette entered, and said, softly:

"Shut the door and lock it, Juliette, I have something of importance to tell you."

Juliette closed the door as she was directed, and approached her guardian.

"You must not be startled," continued the colonel, "at what I am going to tell you."

(To be continued.)

HAWKERS' LICENCES.—The duty on hawkers' licences in Great Britain, by the new Act (33 and 34 Victoria, cap. 32), of 2s. is to be ceased on the 1st of October next.

SCIENCE.

TRIAL OF TORPEDOES.—A sea torpedo has undergone a trial at Plymouth. Several naval authorities were present on board the gunboat *Pigeon*. The first torpedo, towing on the port side, was used against the hulk *Sea Horse*, the gunboat crossing the stern, and the torpedo striking her port amidships about 10 ft. below the water-line. No. 2 torpedo, on the starboard side, was towed against Her Majesty's brig *Squirrel*, under canvas in the offing, and, striking her on the port quarter, came up under her bows. No. 3, towing to starboard, was then brought down upon the turret-ship *Prince Albert*, at shell practice, further out; the gunboat crossed the ship's bow, and the torpedo struck her port bow, 8 ft. under water, and, passing under the bottom, came up on the starboard bow. With No. 4, to port, also used against the *Prince Albert*, the tow-line passed over the ship, and was allowed to run out to the end, the light was then thrown clear, and the torpedo came up from under the bottom. No. 5, to starboard, was used against the brig *Squirrel*, and, striking her on the starboard-bow, at 8 ft. under water, came up under the starboard-quarter. Several other attacks were then made on the turret-ship *Prince Albert* in every conceivable direction, and in almost every instance with complete success, as the capsule was found to be pierced after every contact, showing that had the torpedoes been loaded with an explosive compound, the destruction of the vessels struck must have ensued.

THE PRESSURE OF THE OCEAN.—The pressure exerted by the water of the ocean upon whatever is submerged in its abysses may be readily calculated when the depth is known. The weight of a column of sea water one inch square is almost exactly a ton for every 800 fathoms of its height; and consequently the pressure upon the bottom at 245 fathoms depth is rather over three tons upon every square inch. This, however, has but very little effect upon the density of the water; for the compressibility of water is so slight that even the pressure just mentioned would certainly not reduce it by one-fortieth of its volume, or produce an increase in its density equalling the difference between salt and fresh water. It has been asserted in an "Advanced Text Book of Geology" that "at great depths sand, mud, and all loose *débris* will be compressed and consolidated;" as if these substances were being squeezed in a Bramah press, which should force out all their liquid, and bring their solid particles into the closest possible contact. The fact, now ascertained beyond all doubt, that sand or mud retain its ordinary condition at a depth of nearly three miles, under a pressure of more than three tons on the square inch, is perfectly accordant with the law of fluid pressure; for as such pressure acts equally in all directions it will be exerted just as much in forcing in water between the solid particles as it is in pressing these particles together; and thus, an equilibrium being uniformly maintained, the loose sand or mud of shallow water would remain absolutely unchanged in its condition, to whatever depth the bottom might subside.

NEW PROCESS OF CASTING METALS.—A few days ago a number of gentlemen from London, Manchester, and Liverpool, met at the works of the Lancashire Engineering and Compression Casting Company, St. Helen's Junction, on the Manchester and Liverpool line of railway, to witness the new process of casting, in brass and iron, chased and embossed work of the most elaborate description. The process, which was here for the first time exhibited in England, is an American invention, and its utility was shown to consist in this—that any design, whether in high or low relief, chased on metal of any required pattern or shape, whether flat as a door-plate or round as a vase, can be reproduced by castings from it *ad infinitum*, and each casting will show upon it all the sharpness and beauty of the original chasing. Moulds are made with a preparation of fine clay from the articles to be reproduced. The making of one of these moulds takes a person from five to ten minutes. The moulds have then to stand twenty-four hours to air dry, after which they are baked in a furnace for eight hours. These clay moulds, into which the metal is afterwards poured, are to all intents and purposes encaustic tiles. These clay moulds are placed in a box, and the air is extracted from them so as to form a vacuum, after which the molten metal is forced into them, and in this way in ten minutes a casting can be completed. When the casting is taken out, the design, however intricate, is found to be perfectly represented, with the exception of removing a slight surface of clay from it, which can be done in half-an-hour, and the article is then ready to be sent to the bronzer, instead of having to be kept from a fortnight to a month in the chaser's hands. In this way an enormous amount of cost and labour on ornamental articles in metal is saved.



[PUTNUTTER WARNED]

FIFTEEN THOUSAND POUNDS, DEAD OR ALIVE!

CHAPTER IV

Oh, yes! I see it now,
Yet rather with my heart than with my eyes.
So faint it is. And all my thoughts sail thither,
Freighted with prayers and hopes, and forward urged
Against all stress of accident, as in
The Eastern tale, against the wind and tide
Great ships were drawn to the Magnetic Mountains,
And these were wrecked and perished in the sea.

Longfellow.

"ANYTHING more, sir?" said the barman, as Clyde
gazed at him. "See you have no luggage, sir, except
a bundle, shall I take that up, sir?"
"Up where?" demanded Clyde, grimly.
"To your bed-room, sir. Just overhead, sir."
"My luggage will be here to-morrow, I suppose.
No, you may go."
"Thank you, sir. Suppose, then, you intend stop-
ping a day or two at the Pipe and Pitcher, sir?" re-
marked Mr. Putnutter, trying to find an excuse to
pry into the affairs of the stranger.
But the sharp-eyed boy saw that his rapid little rat-
like eyes leaped to every part of his father's person,
and dwelt especially upon the large hands and small
feet of the sailor. Again the observant lad gave the
signal of danger.
"Mr. Putnutter, or whatever your name may be,"
said Clyde, in a tone like a growl, "go!"
Mr. Putnutter reluctantly departed.
"I do not like that man, father," whispered the
boy.
"So much the worse for him," replied Clyde.
"But eat, my birdies, that you may sleep well, and
be strong in the morning. Now, Mr. Sanders, when
we have finished our supper, we will have pipes and
punch, and if you like, you may tell us how you lost
the stewardship of the Cressy estates."
"And may I not remain, papa, to hear the story?"
asked Childeric.
"Certainly," said David, with animation. "Let
the lad remain. My story may give him some idea
of the ingratitude of men, the treachery of women,
and the baseness of spoiled children."
The meal being concluded, Dame Boxy was called
in to take charge of little Ori.
"I have very little luggage with me, Dame Boxy.
I suppose our chest and trunk will be here to-
morrow; but in this bundle you will find night-
clothing for my little girl, who is, bless her heart,
very particular in that respect."
"Very proper and lady-like in the little miss.

But rest easy in your mind, Mr. Clyde, for I will
wait on her and do for her just as if I was her own
born mother, which, I suppose, will be rejoiced to
see her."

This last was an adroit shot, to see if indeed there
were anywhere in the world a Mrs. Clyde.
"I have no mamma—mamma is dead," said the
little girl, in her sweet, soft voice, and raising her
beautiful eyes to her father's face.
"Oh, her mother is dead. She never saw her
mother. I have no wife," remarked Clyde, curtly.
"Good night, my birdie, and no bad dreams."
And as the child pouted her rosy lips, the rough
man of the sea raised her to his face and kissed her
again and again.
There was something in his stout heart that
warned him a fearful danger was between him and
the time when that angelic child should be kissed by
him again.
"Mayhap I shall be dead and cold by morning,"
he thought, and a tear sprang into his clear, bold
blue eye. "I shall never be taken alive—to be
hanged."
"Oh! what a werry affectionate father he be!
How he reminds me of my darling dead Boxy! only
we never had no babies, Boxy," said the dame, ad-
dressing the ceiling, as if she knew the late land-
lord of the Pipe and Pitcher was up there some-
where.
Then pouncing on the little girl she seated her on
one of her fat shoulders, and so bore her away, little
Ori feeling very much as if she was being treated
to a ride on an elephant.
Putnutter now made his appearance to see that
the dishes, etc., were properly removed by the maid-
servant, whom he ordered about with the air of a
lord.
When she had gone he suddenly faced Clyde and
called out:
"Our village, sir, is all astir to-night. Quite an
exciting rumour afloat, sir. They say the notorious
smuggler, Captain Storme, has been seen not far
from Wayburgh, this very day, sir."
Rattling this off in a free-and-easy, gossipy way,
Mr. Putnutter did not once remove his sharp eyes
from the face of Clyde, nor did Clyde take his steady
gaze from the peaked visage of the speaker.
"We have, in the public room, sir, a full and mi-
nute description of him—even to his toes, sir—he!
he! and we will undoubtedly nab him, sir, if as how
he comes this way—the reward is tremendous, sir,
being over fifteen thousand pounds, sir!"
"And if you came up with this smuggler Storme,
Mr. Putnutter—"
"Putnutter, sir."

"Would you point him out?"
"Wouldn't I! For fifteen thousand one hundred
pounds in gold! Of course—unless—"
"Oh—unless! What? Go on."
"Unless he could pay me down on the nail, sir,
fifteen thousand one hundred and one pounds, sir,
not to point him out. He is very rich they say, and
carries a hundred thousand in Bank o' England
thousand pound notes in a belt around him, sir.
Do you think, sir," said Mr. Putnutter, lowering his
voice, "that he would do it?"
"No doubt," put in David, in his quiet tone; "if
Captain Storme were here at this moment, and
could be assured that paying more than the offered
reward would enable him to escape, he would right
willingly pay it."
Clyde flashed a sharp glance at the old man, and
then gazed again at Mr. Putnutter, who was
saying:
"I'd have to handle the bank notes afore I'd
agree to hold my tongue."
"If all I have heard of this Captain Storme be
true," said Clyde, in a low tone, "he is not unpro-
vided with money, and he is, moreover, dangerous
to take."
"Oh, there'll be no danger to me, sir, as I should
merely point him out," rejoined Putnutter.
"And were Captain Storme to get loose again,
my cunning friend, what do you suppose he would
do to the—ahem! gentleman who calls himself
Daniel Putnutter?"
Clyde paused for a reply, but as the tiger-like
glare of his eyes filled the soul of the barman with
terror, the latter felt his knees bend under him and
his tongue cleave to his jaws.
"If Captain Storme be a man of my kidney, Mr.
Flutterbut," said Clyde, in a deep menacing tone,
"when he got loose—and he is a famous fellow,
they say, to get away—he would hunt you down
even were you to hide under the throne, and when-
ever he should put his hand on you he would break
your neck."
As he spoke he laid his powerful hand on the
shoulder of the terrified Putnutter, and bore him to
his knees.
He held him thus for a moment, gazing sternly
into Putnutter's eyes, and saying in a voice like the
rumble of distant thunder:
"Let me hint something to you, my man. You
seem to be a busybody, like to put your nose on
hot iron in trying to see through it. I have been
told I resemble this Captain Storme, and have been
annoyed therefrom; so I tell you, personally, that
if any man in Wayburgh hints to me, or anyone, that
I resemble that smuggler, may I die a beggar if I

do not kick him over this house and stamp his life out when he comes down."

"In course—and serve him very right, sir. I'd do the same myself, sir," stammered Putnutter.

"Good. Now, as you have my sentiments in this matter, go and brew us a bowl of punch, and bring with it pipes and tobacco."

Putnutter, glad to be released, darted away to obey.

"And now, Mr. Sanders, were it in your power to cause the arrest of this Captain Storme, would you do it?"

"Not for thrice the reward, poor as I am," replied David, promptly.

"You have recognised me?" said Clyde, bluntly.

"Yes. You are Captain Storme, who used to be my wild young friend Childeric," replied the old man, extending his hand.

"Heaven bless you, David Sanders!" exclaimed the smuggler, grasping the hand warmly.

"That fellow Putnutter suspects."

"More than suspects. He believes. He will not rest until he knows. As soon as he is sure he knows he will inform."

"I defy the town to arrest me—to take me alive!" said Clyde, clenching his powerful hands. "I am on my guard. I think the revenue hounds are on the false trail. As we have now met, I can have your advice as regards my children. With me they would suffer."

"Ah, father," interrupted the bold boy, "I'd rather be at sea."

"Of course, my eagle of the surf. But my life afloat is as full of danger as it is ashore, and some day it will end with a snap. None of my life for you, my boy. I was wild and headstrong in my boyhood, and I had a wild adviser in a kinsman who should have been a true friend."

"You mean Mark Renfrew," remarked David.

"Aye—the scoundrel. But it is not for the evil that he did me in my boyhood that I hate him. I could forgive that. You know not," cried the smuggler, with sudden fierceness, "the last great injury he did me. Hark! some one raps at the door."

It was Mr. Putnutter, with a large bowl of steaming punch, and the other articles desired by the sailor.

"Chance was, sir, that we had some excellent ready brewed, sir," said the barman, placing the tray on the table.

"Very well, and don't you chance to come in again until I send for you. I am going to stay here a week, so you and I may chance to be better acquainted."

"A week! Good! It gives me time to study him," thought Putnutter, as he hurried off.

"I need your advice and aid, Mr. Sanders," continued the smuggler. "I have given them what education I could—it is not much—for, more shame to me, I have forgotten almost all I ever learned out of books. I must find a home for Childeric and Orié. My mother being dead, I scarcely know what to do with them. I will think, while you tell me why I see you so reduced in your circumstances—you who had lands and money in abundance when I last saw you."

Quietly, at the same table with the two men, sat the handsome boy, his chin in his hand, eager to hear the story of the old man, and little dreaming how closely he was connected with much old David Sanders was about to tell.

Nor did the bold sailor suspect that aught he might hear was to bear powerfully upon him and his beloved boy.

Nor did the little old man, quiet and white-haired, imagine the storm of rapid action, startling facts and important changes then gathering about them.

And in the room above slumbered in her soft bed the fairy-like child, Orié, with whom the reader is scarcely acquainted, and whose future and past had much in common with some parts of the old man's sad and remarkable story.

And not far away is a stern, dark-faced man who dreams of an earldom as he spurs his horse sharply to hold a stormy interview with old David Sanders. A man who recks little of the crimes he has done in gradually clearing his way towards an earldom, and who little suspects that he is on his way to meet, face to face, the famous smuggler of the French and English seas—Captain Childeric Storme, who has sworn to put his heel on the heart of Mark Renfrew, the evil spirit of his destiny.

And, meanwhile, Sir Jules Cressy, lord of Cressy Hall, surrounded by the accumulated wealth and luxuries of generations of a noble race, sits and smokes his fragrant cigar, little dreaming that this little old white-haired man is speaking of him and the beautiful but sinful lady he has loved and ceased to love.

And hurrying towards Wayburgh, men with gold bands around their caps are coming. They look sharply at the priming of their pistols and the hilts of their sabres as they spur their horses, and talk of the enormous reward, "15,000—dead or alive!" and think they know very well where to find Captain Storme.

CHAPTER V.

Vic: What more of this strange story?

Chitapa: Nothing more.

Spanish Student.

SAID David first addressing the boy, and little imagining how nearly all that he said bore upon the boy's fortune:

"I must first tell you something of the Cressy family, my lad. It is an ancient and noble family, and traces its line far beyond the landing of William the Conqueror, among the time-dimmed chronicles of the noble houses of France. Some of the name have added, and some have scattered; but in general all have increased the original wealth of the founder of the name in England, old Brian Childeric de Cressy. There have been eads and even dukes in the family, but at present the original great of the Conqueror, which is strictly entitled, is held by Sir Jules Amour de Cressy."

"In an old manuscript at Cressy Hall, as old as the Conquest, there are proofs that the Normans wanted the present landed estates from Ethelred Sandew—my Saxon ancestor—and gave it to Brian Childeric de Cressy. My father and his father, clear back to the son of this Saxon theme, have been stewards of the De Cressy estates; and when my father died, I became his successor in that honorable and responsible office, under old Sir Childeric, the father of young Sir Childeric, who was lost at sea."

"Oh, lost at sea!" exclaimed Clyde.

"Yes, he and his young wife, and a sad loss he it proved to me."

"Had he no children to inherit after him?"

"I will come to that presently," said old David, who wished to tell his story in his own way. "I omitted to say—there is a strange prophecy in our family, in the Sanders family."

"Ah," said Clyde, with a careless smile. "A prophecy?"

"It is this—The Cressy estates were wanted from the Sanders by a Cressy. Some day a Cressy shall give them all to a Sanders."

"Good! May I live to see that day!" exclaimed the sailor.

"When I became steward I came into a large salary, as well as quite a large landed estate left me by my father. I was past middle-age when I married and became father of a son. Ah, when I first saw that son, I little dreamed the day was coming in which I was to curse the hour of his birth, and the hour of mine also!"

The old man heaved a great sigh, and paused for a moment as if gathering strength to go on. A frowning gloom hung upon his eyes, and Clyde broke the silence.

"So the boy did not prove a joy?"

"No, a curse! An unnatural, thankless child," burst suddenly from the old man; and then he paused again, as if overcome by the rising of the past, and the humiliation of the present, and the hopelessness of the future.

Growing impatient the sailor inquired:

"And who is the steward of the De Cressy estates now?"

The eyes of David Sanders blazed as he replied:

"Who but my son Jerome!"

"Ah!"

"My curse upon him."

"You are cursing your own son, Mr. Sanders. It is a dread thing for a parent to do," said Clyde, much moved.

"You shall hear why. Net a week after the birth of my son, my wife died—I was told that it was less than a week after he was born—born to be my curse—born to be cursed by me—his father—great heaven!"

"Then it chanced that you were not present when he was born, and when his mother died?"

"Yes. The boy was born in the far north of England, at a time when my poor Emily was on a visit to her father. I heard of her illness but a few hours before I was told she was dead. The unexpected blow so shattered me that I was prostrated upon my bed for months. Would that the blow had killed me! My heart has been sick unto death as times ever since. I have never had fortitude enough to dare to visit her grave. She lies buried there in the north of England among her kindred."

The old man groaned and was silent again.

"And the boy?"

"The boy was sent to me at Little Ullsburgh, about a year after my wife's sudden death. Ah, I did not appreciate all my loss until my boy Jerome began to grow in years and viciousness. My wife was a mild and pious woman, but resolute in her will against evil. Had she lived—oh, had she lived to rear and guide that wayward, headstrong boy, he might never have turned like a warmed adder, and struck his fangs into the heart of his miserable father."

"He is an ungrateful scoundrel," cried Clyde, indignantly.

But in a voice full of contrition and self-reproach he instantly added:

"It does not become me to raise my voice against him, for mayhap I too broke my mother's heart."

"Not so, not so! I can vouch for that," said David, who was ever ready to accept contrition.

"Your mother grieved over your conduct, it is true, but though you ran away from your home and heart, you never spoke an unkind word to her ever in your wildest moments."

"Thank Heaven, David Sanders, I can swear to that."

"You never reviled her, never stole her property from her, never struck her."

"Bunk! And did this son of yours dare to strike his father?"

"Ah, it was my own fault," replied David, bitterly. "I indulged him in everything. I denied him nothing, good or evil. I had not strength of will to put him down. As a babe, he was fretful and inquisitive; as a boy he was quick, intelligent, vicious; as a youth, he was wild, violent, reckless, insolent, disobedient, cunning, bold, unscrupulous; as a man, he was cold, cunning, revengeful, ambitious—a mystery to me—for I know his heart is all flame, his brain all ice."

"As a whole," broke in the impatient sailor, "he is a shark from stem to stern. Spew with him!"

And seating the action to the wind, he dashed his pipe to atoms against the wall.

"I fear he is all bad," said the old man, sinking from his fiery earnestness to timidity. "I often fear, too, he may commit some awful crime to stain the name-honoured name he bears."

Speaking thus, he closed his eyes and shook his long, white locks wearily.

"Poor old gentleman!" said the boy, gently, and laying his hand kindly upon the shoulder of the old man.

"Ha, my lad!—my eagle of the surf!—you'll never trust me thus, my Childeric!" cried Clyde, as he kissed the brow and cheeks of his son, and stroked the boy's jolly curls.

The boy drew the hard, strong hand of his father to his lips and kissed it, saying:

"May you behold me dead first, father!"

"Oh, Heaven! how I love this boy!" exclaimed Clyde, enfolding the lad in his arms.

And while thus clasped, these two exchanged a gaze of boundless affection.

"Listen, Childeric. He's telling us more of this ungrateful son."

"Yes, I must speak of him," said David, with an effort. "He hated books, he hated teachers, he abhorred and defied control, and so he grew to be a youth untaught, and would now be a very savage but for a woman—Julia Stayoy."

He uttered this name with great effort. It seemed to stick in his throat for a moment and as he pronounced it, he grew very white and his thin features writhed with hate.

He passed his withered hands over his withered cheeks, and resumed in an instant, rapidly:

"This woman was a widow. She made her appearance in Little Ullsburgh suddenly, a stranger to every one. All called her beautiful. All call her so now—in form, in face, and voice. I thought her an angel—not at first, but afterward. I learned, too late, that she was a fiend!"

And here the old man broke into the following bitter and passionate apostrophe, addressed to the hated absent woman:

"Oh, Julia Stayoy! how I hate you! I loathe you, and the very memory of all your winning ways, your dainty, agile form, your ivory shoulders, your neck of snow, your soft and gliding step—so light it seemed to me your beautiful feet did not bruise the less beautiful flowers they trod upon! And your smooth, fair, rose face, with its dimpling smile—burning, burning smiles! And your glittering golden hair, your fathomless eyes of blue that seemed ever floating in dreams of love! I hate them now—I hate them all! Better, a thousand times better, had it been for me had my boy never met you, to be made by your teaching the ingrate he is. I remember well the first time I saw you, Julia Stayoy. I was just returning home from Cressy Hall, eight years ago it was, after paying over the quarterly rents to Sir Jules; and just at the late which leads from the park avenue into the grounds that once were mine, I met you, Julia Stayoy, holding my great unteachable boy by the hand, and he smiling up in your face. You must have used some potent charm, some magic to persuade that young savage—who was as shy of women as a partridge of sportsmen—to take your hand in his, and you a stranger to us all! Ah, I remember how charmed I was to see that the handsome barbarian became polite and graceful, as you and he walked side-by-side. I did not dream then of making you my wife—not then, nor for many a day—not until after you had planned, and plotted, and schemed, and flattered and made me a fool. Then I began to think what a noble mother you might be for Jerome, and what a magnificent wife for me. And didn't you make a nice wife for David Sanders, Julia Stayoy?"

Here the tone of the old man was of the keenest irony, and he went on in the same bitter way:

"Oh, yes, you smiled—how sweetly! you showed your pearly teeth glowing within your rich red lips—lips moist and ripe as blushing cherries! and burned my soul with your passion-swimming eyes! and charmed my brain with your soft, flute-like voice! Ha! I little dreamed then—fore I married you—nor found it true for many a day, how shrill and torturing you could make that musical voice, and how those ripe and tempting lips could grow hard and livid, and curl with hate, and scorn, and fury; and how those dreamy eyes could blaze with the violence of a fiend let loose; and how those pearly teeth could set themselves in wrath that was like madness, and glitter with rage. But I know it now, Julia Staycey. And what spells you, sovereign of beauty! must have used to tame that fierce and turbulent boy—a boy fully fourteen years old then—age of obstinacy, of willfulness, of deceit; tame him to lead where you would, as if he were a child—and you so young in form and feature, seeming not five years older than he!"

"And how old was she then?" asked Clyde, abruptly.

The question, sudden as it was, did not check the old man's bitter apostrophe.

"You were far older than that, Julia Staycey, though you seemed not twenty—so fair, and fresh, and springy were you. Yes, 'twas at the entrance of Sanders' Lane I first met you, with your sunny curls of golden silk just lifting around your wax-like brow and rosy face the balmy evening breeze of the spring-time kissed and fluttered them, and the rough, savage boy made as gentle as a girl by the magic of your presence. It was there our acquaintance began, and it was there, after I had married you, I cursed the place and the hour of our first meeting. You ruined me, Julia Staycey."

"My friend," he added, and fixing his eyes on Clyde in a dreamy way, "I often wonder what great and, to me, all unknown crime I may have committed, that Heaven sent a curse upon me that I should forget for a time my first wife, and wed Julia Staycey, and how long I am to be punished."

The old man sighed and paused, and Clyde said, in his abrupt way:

"And where is your wife—this Julia Staycey—now?"

"She was Julia Staycey," replied David, bitterly; "but I made her Mrs. Julia Sanders, and she is now housekeeper, or companion, or in some position that makes her head housekeeper at Cressy Hall."

"Sir Jules de Cressy has no wife?"

"No," replied David, with a frown.

Clyde, who had been smoking David's pipe, laid it aside, and blew a gentle whistle, and said:

"So she is now a—regular clipper."

"I do not know, my friend, what you mean by the expression, 'a regular clipper'; but if you mean a woman who is all and keen, self-hand and unscrupulous, ambitious and avaricious, and the embodiment of all that is evil in woman, she is a regular clipper."

"Good! that is what I mean. I understand now what she is. Go on."

"Our acquaintance having begun," resumed David, "and to the words immediately following we ask the particular attention of the reader as they bear heavily upon the plot of this story—"she told me she was from the north of England—a widow, her husband having been dead a year—he was a captain in the royal navy, she said; that she had come to Little Ullsburgh to try to earn a respectable livelihood by teaching. She claimed to be a distant relative of my dead wife's family, and showed me letters which proved the truth of her assertions, and that her character was spotless. I did not doubt her. How could I? In her fair and beautiful face I recognised a most remarkable resemblance to my dead Emily, and to my son. She asked my aid in getting up a school. I gave it gladly, she so resembled my beloved wife as she threw herself on my benevolence. I was in easy circumstances, owning the Sanders estate, and several houses and farms, which my thrift and that of my father had added to my grandfather's estate. In addition I was receiving a large salary as steward of the Cressy estates. So I was able to be a powerful friend, and very soon she had a lucrative and flourishing school."

"As for me," put in the blunt sailor, with a hearty laugh, "I was always afraid of school teachers. One basted me pretty sharp, I remember—old Madam Switchquick—for capsizing a bottle of ink into her vest bonnet. What has become of her?"

"Of whom?"

"Old Madam Switchquick."

"She lives yet, in Little Ullsburgh."

"Bombs! then let me steer wide of her claws, for she can grapple like a cuttle-fish. She'll never forget the lad that filled her Sunday bonnet with ink. But go on with your story."

"I placed my son Jerome in Julia Staycey's school, and it amazed me to see how rapidly he became first scholar of all. It amazes me yet. She controlled him with a glance. She made him change his manner towards me—I blessed her for that—I

don't bless her for that now—but I did then. I thanked Heaven for giving me such an amiable son as he became under her tuition!"

"You were deceived!"

"Wait. In course of time I married Julia Staycey—or she married me—I scarcely know how it came about. I knew now she need scarcely have plotted as she did, for I was infatuated by her resemblance to my dead wife. I thought I was about to renew the happiness of my first marriage. And I was happy while the dream lasted. It was a very short dream. I awoke from the dream to find that my second wife was indeed an angel in form, but a fiend at heart. She had achieved her object in making me her husband. Having attained that, she soon proved to me that she regarded me merely as a necessary appendage to the comforts and luxuries of the home I had given her. Again my son became as he had ever been before he met this evil woman, this demon in the disguise of an angel. He and his stepmother joined hands against me. They made my life at home, my life everywhere a misery. To secure peace I submitted in silence to a thousand insults. There is nothing aggressive, and scarcely anything self-defensive in my character. I yielded to every demand, I became reckless in my desire to calm their incessant persecutions. I signed this deed and that deed until I was stripped of all my property. I will not weary you by relating in detail all the acts and scenes of violent rage she used, the many steps she took, the thousand and one plans she and my son concocted and sprung upon me. They were years at it. Years of misery and humiliation to me. This have released me almost to beggary. And in all this her chief adviser was Mark Renfrew."

"Mark Renfrew!" exclaimed Clyde, with a start.

"Ah, I half suspected that snake was to show a coil in this foul cable. And what interest had he in it?"

"He was desperately in love with my wife," replied David, with a bitter laugh.

"Oh, in love with your wife!"

"And to gain her smiles he would have gladly done any wrong, any crime. She deceived him, as she deceived everyone—except my son Jerome. She made use of Mark Renfrew as one uses a pair of tongs—to stir the fire of her iniquity. And so of that lawyer, Barefint."

"He! and is that thistle of Satan's thorn-patch, Barefint, still alive?"

"He is not hanged yet," replied David, sharply.

"My wife used Renfrew and Barefint as mere tools, and may be doing so yet, for all I know."

"You signed away all your property—to her?"

"No, not a farthing. All to my son Jerome. She asked or rather demanded nothing for herself. I made it all over to her, every foot of land, everything, only to hold for him until he should attain legal age to use it as his own."

"David Sanders," said the sailor, "you used to pass for a very shrewd man, a famous manager—but—"

"You know now that I was but an idiot to be moved at will by a second wife and my son," cried the old man, with a biting scorn of himself. "But I was half mad. That woman was sometimes angelic, and I yielded to her softness; then again she would be a demon, and I yielded to her fury."

"Had he—I spoke not of her—had he simply driven me from the home of my ancestors, the home of his ancestors, I might say—Heaven forgive him! That home had become no home to me, and hard as the resolve was to act, I had determined to leave it when I was made to leave it—when I was dragged from it. But the crime—the other crime of which I have not spoken—when he did that! Ah, it was terrible!"

"If there is any crime short of murdering one's father, that is greater than driving one's old father from his home, hang me!" said Clyde, emphatically.

"There is," replied the old man, as his eyes flashed and his features quivered. "For all the years of sorrow he has caused me, for all the bitter tears he has made me shed, for all the groans he has crushed from my heart, for siding with a deceitful woman to rob me of my property, aye, even for striking me, I could forgive my son were he to ask it; but for planning a robbery that was intended to end in a murder, so that the crime should be fixed upon me, his father, I cannot, I will not forgive Jerome Sanders!"

"The viper did that!"

"He did," groaned the unhappy old man; "and for a time men believed that I, David Sanders, honest old David Sanders, had lived to be a thief, a robber, a burglar, a would-be murderer. I was tried and barely acquitted. Who the real malefactor was is not yet known to the officers of the law. I know my son had a share in my being arrested for the crime. I was acquitted—a mere chance, let me say the goodness and mercy of Heaven, enabled me to prove my innocence. I was acquitted, but the stain of the accusation remained,

and I was discharged from the prisoner's dock to find my son steward of the *De Cressy* estates, and my wife the housekeeper—let me say often a harsher name that may justify her—for Sir Jules Armoor de Cressy!"

With this the unfortunate old man bowed his head and wept.

"So your account of a son turned you out of doors!"

"When I was arrested he denied me! He bade me never dare enter his house again—his house! He said that to me as the constables put irons on these old wrists. I was cast into jail, and I lay there as an untried malefactor for weeks and months ere the tardy course of the law set me free again."

"And how long ago was this, Mr. Sanders?"

"I have been an acquitted man three months," replied David, groaning.

"But how is it that your faithless wife gained this position near Sir Jules, and what kind of a man is the baronet? And how do you now support yourself?" asked Clyde, with a volley of blunt but kindly meant questions.

"I will answer the last inquiry first," replied David. "Many years ago a small but comfortable house fell to me in the payment of a debt due to my father—a house not far from Cressy Hall. Fortunately my wife and son never knew that the property was mine, and fortunately for me I never told them. It had been leased to an aged woman for many years, and was supposed to be hers. She lives there still, but the house is mine; the lease has expired—recently—and there I have welcome shelter. This aged woman, grateful for former kindness I showed her, gives me the little I need."

"I owe you for many a good turn you did me in my wild boyhood," said Clyde, as he thrust his hand into his bosom; "and unless you wish to hurt my heart, old friend, accept this as a very small return."

So saying the large-hearted sailor poured a handful of golden coins into the battered old hat of the much-injured man.

"And this!" cried Childeric, as he opened his purse and emptied its glittering store into the hat. "Papa has taught me to aid the poor."

CHAPTER VI.

Oh, let thy weary heart
Lean upon mine! and it shall faint no more,
Nor thirst, nor hunger; but be comforted,
And filled with my affection. *ANON.*

DAVID SANDERS was for a moment speechless with surprise and emotion; and then, as a happy tear rolled down his withered cheek, he said:

"Heaven bless you both! I—I thank you—but I cannot—"

"Say no more," interrupted the sailor. "You must not think it is given in charity—and, if it may ease your mind, let me say 'tis gold honestly earned, and not by smuggling. Now, too, that my mother is dead, and that I must find a guardian for my children, with whom can I leave them? Certainly in no hands and care so faithful as yours will be, David Sanders."

"Ah, my friend, have I not just proved to you how totally unfitted I am to rear the young? I have no power to command—none," replied the old man, sighing.

"My children are not like Jerome, and I shall keep up a steady communication with you. At all events, I see no better way at present. At any moment the sharks of the law may show their teeth to snap me up. Do not refuse to shelter them—my children—for a few days."

"Certainly I will do all I can. I know the great danger you are in."

"Thank you, David Sanders. You accept the charge?"

"Most solemnly."

"Remember, that if at any moment I am forced to disappear, my children that instant fall under your care. I at this instant in great danger is not far from me. I feel it in my heart. You smile; but it is a true sign of danger not far off, with me, when my head begins to warp and creep as if alive—at least I believe so. Here is more money, in notes," said Clyde, quickly drawing from under his blouse a broad belt thickly stuffed. "Hide it—fasten it around your waist under your vest—it is crammed with all the earnings of my life. There are more than two hundred thousand pounds sterling in Bank of England notes in it. It is for my children if I perish in the flight I meditate. I speak rapidly because something tells me—it creeps in my flesh—that an enemy is near—oh, you have concealed the belt well! Good. Now, Childeric, my boy, regard this good old man as my father while I live, and as yours if I die—as I may—suddenly and soon."

The intelligent boy's eyes had filled with tears as his father spoke, but turning to the old man he said:

"If you, sir, love me, I shall love you and obey

you, and I know you will love our little Orie. We will try to make you happy."

"Bless you, my child," said David, in a tremulous tone, as he laid his withered hand on the young and noble head, and smoothed the clustering curls from the broad, bold brow. "I am sure I shall be made happy by your love."

He glanced at Clyde. The late rapid energy of the sailor had sunk into a deep gloom. He sat with folded arms, staring at the floor.

Said David, gently:

"A noble hearted-boy, my friend. Did you rear him to be so, unaided by his—his mother?"

"His mother!—his mother!" stammered Clyde, starting from his reverie. "His mother perished at sea, years ago. I reared the lad myself, having had gentle rearing, as you know."

"So she perished at sea. His poor mother perished at sea," said David, in a musing tone. "How many noble hearts have that sad phrase for their only epitaph: 'Perished at sea!' And so perished my good and kind young master, Sir Childerio, the last of the direct line of the noble De Cressays! And with him perished his young wife and their babe—remorseless, murderous sea! Why, even now, I seem to see the father of Sir Childerio's wife giving her away at the altar. His name was Maurice de Kollan, and—"

"What!" almost shouted Clyde.

"Eh! You startled me! I was saying that the name of the father of the late Lady de Cressay was married to a De Kollan."

"Oh—and her maiden name in full?"

"Was Clara Maria de Kollan."

"At last! at last!" thought the smuggler. "I have feared it, I have dreaded it, I have beat it down, I have turned my brain against it—that suspicion—and now it comes home to me and rives my very soul."

He uttered not a word of this aloud, but rising from his seat paced the room to and fro with a slow and heavy stride.

"Your father seems greatly disturbed," whispered David to Childerio. "What moves him thus?"

"I do not know. I never have dared ask him since he rebuked me once for asking," replied the boy, in the same tone.

"Then he is often thus crushed in heart, and yet angry, as it were?"

"I have seen him so more than once," replied the boy, evasively.

Little did kind old David Sanders suspect the cause of this strange mood of the powerful seaman was a most perplexing mystery to the son, and that the boy had often strained every nerve of his precociously strong intellect in trying to fathom this dark heaviness of his father's face, and that the lad never saw it without a fear that he or Orie were in some way connected with it.

"Childerio!" cried Clyde, suddenly and reproachfully: "you are trying to get at my great secret."

"Dear father—I am with you only to love you."

"Right!—always right! dear boy," replied Clyde, mentally adding as he strode to and fro. "He must be told, some day. I thought I was doing all for the best, not being sure of the truth. I am sure of it now. It will not be safe for the lad to make the truth known now. And there is Orie, too! Did ever a father love his children more? But there is no proof but the dreary story of this dreary old man. Shall I search further, and be made more miserable? Shall I try to cram a belief of what I fear to believe into my brain, that the truth, like a bomb, shall explode and burst my heart! Does any one suspect? Can any one suspect unless I question? The secret is mine; and, right or wrong, it shall never be another's while I live."

There was a quick, sharp rap at the door, and instantly after the door was opened suddenly, revealing the figure and face of a tall, thin, dark-featured man.

"Mark Renfrew!" exclaimed David, springing to his feet and clutching his cane.

"Fire and—!" began Clyde; but Childerio, who was at his side, grasped his arm and so checked the loud exclamation.

"Right, love!" whispered Clyde, as he wheeled on his heel so as to present his back to the new comer. "He has not yet looked towards us."

"Mark Renfrew, at your service, David Sanders," said the stranger, striding into the room and closing the door behind him. "You seem surprised to see me here."

"You are here to see me?"

"Of course. They told me in the public room you were here, and I hoped to find you alone."

Here Renfrew glanced at the disguised sailor and raised his harsh voice as a hint that David's companions should depart. But the latter, whose backs were towards him, evinced no intention to vacate the room.

David, too, said sharply:

"Why do you wish to see me, Mark Renfrew?"

I have no property—or I might know you had come to ask a loan, as you used to do. I have no daintily spread board—or I would know you had come to feast at my expense, as you used to do. I have no good name—or I might know you had come to seek a mode to sully it, as you used to do. And I have no wife—or I might suspect you had come to woo her behind my back and over my shoulders, as you used to do. You may find her at Cressay Hall."

The old man, quivering with rage and dislike, uttered these biting taunts in a hissing voice, husky with passion—passion terribly expressive in the person of a man in general so quiet and timid.

The recital of his wrongs had fired the blood of the old man.

A dangerous brightness gleamed in the eyes of Mark Renfrew as he heard, yet he replied smoothly, though haughtily:

"Mr. Sanders, I am not here in the haste I am, to speak of the past as it is personal to you and me. I know it would be but waste of time for me to attempt to disabuse your mind of your erroneous belief that I am your enemy."

"I have no desire to speak with Mark Renfrew upon any subject," interrupted David, curtly.

Renfrew's dark and conspirator-like face grew darker, and an expression of fierce anger blazed from his features—features singularly handsome and haughty, though sinister and dark.

Had no one been present he might have grasped the throat of the old man and enforced his attention. But as he flashed a wary glance around the room he caught Childerio's eyes fixed upon him.

"Great heaven! what a resemblance!" he thought, and recoiled a step as he met the steady gaze of the boy's intelligent eyes.

"That boy? Who is he?" he demanded, eagerly.

"He is my son," replied the deep, rich voice of the smuggler, as he swung around his powerful frame, faced Renfrew for an instant, and then sat down again, with his broad shoulders towards Renfrew.

"Ah! your son? A farmer's son—I judge by your garb and his, sir. He has a very intelligent face, and very much resembles a portrait in the picture gallery at Cressay Hall."

"Ay—the faces of many boys have some features in common. The lad was born in France," growled Clyde, with a true French shrug of the shoulders. "Please conclude your conversation with Mr. Sanders as speedily as may be, for this is at present my apartment, and I desire his attention myself."

Clyde said this without facing Renfrew, and in a broad, country dialect.

"Indeed," sneered Renfrew, his haughty spirit resenting this rudeness from a supposed inferior. "I should never suspect that you have been in France, my friend, judging from your manners; but my business with Mr. Sanders is so pressing, that I shall not hurry my departure, even for you."

"You—!" began Clyde, and rising to his feet in a flash; but the rapid touch of his son caused him to sit down as suddenly. "I yield to you, sir."

"Thanks! as I consider my claims upon his attention very imperative," continued Renfrew, also sitting down. "Mr. Sanders, I am here to speak of the Storme estate."

"Well, sir," said David, very eager to divert Renfrew's attention to himself.

"You are chief executor by the will of Mrs. Evelina Storme," began Renfrew, "and as the seven years have expired—"

"They have not."

"You mistake," continued Renfrew, as a flash of rage shot from his eyes. "The seven years expired at three p.m. to-day. She died November 15th, 1819, at three o'clock p.m. To-day is the 15th, 1826. The specified seven years have expired. I have ridden over from Little Ullsburgh to receive your affidavit to that fact. I need but that to receive twenty thousand pounds cash for my right as heir."

"The property is worth more than twenty-five thousand pounds."

"True; but I am in great need of money. Twenty thousand pounds will free me from all my pressing liabilities, and Barefint has promised the amount on your affidavit. Other legal forms of transfer we can attend to at your leisure."

"Mrs. Storme died on the 18th of November, and not on the 15th; therefore the seven years have not expired."

"You are sure of that?" questioned Renfrew, sneeringly.

"I know it. It is so recorded in the sexton's record of deaths, of St. Thomas' Church, of Little Ullsburgh. I saw it myself. I copied the date into this book." And here the positive old man showed his note book.

Renfrew laughed and said:

"The fault of your eyes, my friend. It was the 15th, not the 18th."

"It may be so now in the sexton's records; an erasure, or rather, a partial erasure of the figure 8 having been made—perhaps with the connivance of the sexton."

"By whom?"

"By the man most interested—by the man who has borrowed largely already from Barefint—perhaps already twenty thousand pounds. By you."

"Take care, old man!"

"Oh, I know you, Mark Renfrew, and I have long guarded against the rascality of that sexton. You must wait three days, or, rather, your friend and lawyer, Sharpstone Barefint, must wait three days. Until that time I shall continue my guardianship of the rights of another."

"What other?" demanded Renfrew, sharply.

"Childerio Storme, the son of Hiram Storme and his wife, Evelina."

"Boah! He is dead."

"Ah! Do you know that? Can you prove it, Mark Renfrew?"

"Certainly; or I should not say so. I am here to prove it to you. Come, I need money."

"I need not be told that."

Renfrew scowled at this taunt, but continued, carelessly:

"What proof have you that Mrs. Storme did not die on the 15th of November, 1819?"

Meanwhile Clyde had risen, and so had his son, apparently walking carelessly about the room. There were two doors to the apartment, and as the boy strolled by them, one after the other, he locked them noiselessly, and gave the keys to his father, who continued to pace about.

David, replying to Renfrew, said, calmly:

"I hold all the receipts of the bills incurred at the decease of Mrs. Storme. That for the funeral is dated the 23rd. There are others. But it does not matter, for I shall not resign my guardianship until after the 18th of this month."

"Thank you. I shall bear your kindness in memory," sneered Renfrew. "But to-morrow I begin to act, for the son is dead. Here—read this article in the *Ullsburgh Gazette*, just out."

"With an air of malicious triumph Renfrew opened a newspaper and, pointing out what he wished to be read, gave it to David."

The latter read aloud as follows:

"We have positive information that three officers of the Revenue Service yesterday came up with the notorious smuggler, Captain Charles Storme. He refused to be taken alive, and fought desperately until shot down, and in the struggle killed two of his assailants. He lived but a few minutes after he fell, but long enough to confess that he was indeed the formidable smuggler, Storme, who had so long baffled all attempts to put an end to his career. The surviving officer is justly entitled to the enormous reward of fifteen thousand pounds, offered by the Admiralty and others for the capture of Captain Storme, dead or alive, though of course of the heirs the two officers slain will advance their claims to share. It is now well known that Captain Storme was the long missing heir to the estate of Hiram and Evelina Storme, formerly of this town."

"I have always known that the smuggler was my headstrong Cousin Childerio," said Renfrew, as David laid the paper aside. "Even were he not alive he would be an outlaw, and the estate would fall to me."

Neither David nor Renfrew had remarked the eagerness with which Clyde listened to the reading of the newspaper article. His blue eyes dilated, his lips parted, and his teeth were bared set.

"Ah," he thought. "So perished a noble heart! My brave and faithful mate, Tenney, who, like me, swore never to be taken alive, and who in dying has showed his fidelity to me by declaring himself to be the hunted smuggler chief. He did that to stop the pursuit of his friend. Oh, great-hearted John Tenney!"

"You see—the Storme estate is now mine!" exclaimed Renfrew, triumphantly.

"What if I declare that Captain Storme has left an heir—a child—two children," said David. "They can inherit."

"Yes, and Captain Storme has two children," said the sonorous voice of the smuggler, as he advanced and laid his hand upon Renfrew's shoulder.

A death-like pallor crept over Renfrew's face as those words were spoken, and under the stern pressure of that powerful hand he trembled violently.

He sprang to his feet and glared into the blue eyes that confronted him. Rage succeeded his momentary surprise, and he cried out:

"Who are you? How dare you, fellow, put your hand on me?"

"I am Captain Storme!" replied Clyde with haughty fierceness; and in thus boldly declaring himself the hunted outlaw, his powerful frame became as erect as a mast, his person assumed an expression of habitual command, his arms crossed on his deep, broad chest, and his head seemed poised like that of a gladiator ready to attack or repel.

Renfrew recoiled in dismay, staring wildly.

"Captain Storme!"

"Aye—and Childerio Storme. Lower your tone, or you are a dead man."

"Am I one of your sailors, villain?" exclaimed

Benfrew, drawing a pistol like a flash and aiming it at the head of the smuggler. "Ha! here's for the fifteen thousand pounds—dead or alive!"

At the last word his finger pressed the trigger of his weapon.

(To be continued.)

LADY BARBARA.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE arrival of Felix Wamer at that late hour at Black Cottage, and so unexpectedly to Dora and young Mr. Weir, of course interrupted and deferred the young girl's projected escape.

"Was there ever anything so inopportune?" sighed Dora, as Wamer disappeared with Mrs. Narr within the door of the dwelling. "What shall we do, Noel?"

"Wait and see what the villain wants," replied Noel, from his sheltered nook amidst the thick foliage of the tree.

"He cannot want to see me?" said Dora anxiously and uneasily.

"I think he will call upon you."

Dora began to tremble. Noel could see how white her face grew, as she leaned against the window, looking up pleadingly at him.

"If I could only be spared this meeting!" she murmured.

The young man's heart yearned towards her.

"My poor little Dora!" he whispered. "Be brave. Remember I am near you, and I shall be ready at your call to spring in at the window to your aid. And as soon as he goes, we will make our escape. Can't you keep up your courage a little longer?"

The girl nodded assent, and her countenance grew brave and calm.

She went back into the room and removed her hat and sash, and then, returning to the window, leaned against the frame, and looked out upon her lover with softly shining eyes.

She was standing there, when her door was unlocked, and Mrs. Narr entered, bearing a light.

"You have not gone to bed, Dora?" she asked, in a harsh, peremptory voice, holding the light above her, and peering at the bed. "Ah, no! There you are at the window a-mooning!"

She set down the candle and advanced towards the maiden.

Dora dropped the thin lace curtains, thus screening the open window, and moved a few steps towards the centre of the room.

The woman eyed her critically.

"You'll do," she muttered. "You are looking even better than usual, with them blushes on your cheeks. Some one has come!"

"I know it," said Dora quietly. "I saw him—Mr. Wamer."

"Oh, you did? I never saw a man who loved a girl as he loves you, Dora. He has traced you here—"

"You mean," interposed Dora, "that you sent him word of my whereabouts?"

The woman looked at Dora sharply, and then broke into a boisterous laugh.

"You keep your eyes open, Dora," she exclaimed, admiringly. "Well, I won't deny that we sent him word where to find us, for a kinder, civiler-spoken gentleman I never saw. And so he's come! And he wants to see you. Will you go down to the parlour, or will you see him here?"

As she asked the question she looked around the next chamber, as if to examine into its fitness as a reception-room.

The bed was set in an alcove, and hidden by curtains of white dimity. The room itself had always served as a lady's private sitting-room, and was well adapted for the purpose.

"I decline to see him at all," said Dora, spiritingly. "I dislike Mr. Wamer, and I have no wish to hear any more insults from his lips. If you are my mother—as you claim—you will protect me from the foul presence of this man!"

Mrs. Narr frowned.

"This is pretty talk to your mother!" she ejaculated. "You are my daughter—you are a minor, and consequently obliged by law to obey me; and I command you to receive Mr. Wamer as my friend, if not as your own! Things have come to a fine pass, I think, when daughters—if they have been adopted out by a fine family that turned 'em out poor and helpless—attempt to dictate to their mothers. You have got to see Mr. Wamer, or you'll regret it—that's a jine!"

Dora's cheeks flushed with indignation. Yet she controlled herself admirably.

"I am in your power, Mrs. Narr," she said, coldly. "Since I must see your 'friend,' I will see him here."

"And you'd better be polite to him," warned Mrs. Narr, shaking her head threateningly. "You are only the daughter of poor parents, and your fine-lady airs won't pass here! Just forget that Mr. Chessom and his wife ever adopted you and made much of you, and bear in mind you are only Dora Narr, and not much at that!"

With this she retired from the room.

Dora retreated again to the window.

A minute later the door again opened, and Felix Wamer came slowly and hesitatingly into the chamber.

Dora regarded him in surprise.

All his smoothness and assurance seemed gone. He was pale and dejected, and appeared to be in deep trouble. His eyes drooped before her bright glances, and his manner was at once anxious, humble, and deprecating.

His new character, however, sat well upon him. His deep melancholy, as perhaps he knew, was becoming to him.

He had left Saltair on the previous day, as has been said, and had slept in London the previous night.

This day, at the close of which he had now called upon Dora, had been spent by him in the vicinity of the Surrey farm, of which Jack Narr had formerly been sub-tenant, and in a close investigation of the affairs of the Narrs. He had made various discoveries, and now, when he stood before the young girl the picture of sorrow and humility, he was at heart glad and exultant.

He paused near the door, and, raising his eyes in seeming timidity, exclaimed, in a voice of deepest melancholy:

"Dora—"

"Miss Chessom, if you please, sir!" said Dora, with spirit.

He came a step nearer, and looked at her as in anguished pleading.

Dora drew closer to the window. Her radiant brown eyes were like glowing stars. The rose tint in her cheeks flickered like a red flame behind an alabaster shade. Pure and dainty and sweet, with a rare and glorious loveliness, she was as much above Wamer as an angel is above a demon.

He seemed to feel the distance between them, and made as though he would have knelt to her.

"Dora," he said, in a broken voice, "I have come back to crave your forgiveness for that cowardly insult of the other day. I did it in a moment of madness. Forgive me."

And now he actually sank on his knees at her feet, and lifted his pleading face, on which were tears.

He was a splendid actor. He might have made his fortune on the stage, since he acted the character he had assumed—that of the heartbroken, repentant sinner—to the life.

Dora was bewildered. Yet, somehow, she felt vaguely his insincerity and shrank from him.

"You had better rise," she said, coldly. "Kneel to your Maker, not to your fellow-mortal."

"My place is at your feet!" groaned Wamer. "I will never rise until you have forgiven me. Can you not make allowances for me, Dora? Is there no tender pity for me in your soul? I was mad when I insulted you. It all came from my accursed pride. Can you ever make allowances for me?"

"I don't think I can," replied Dora, drily.

"But hear my defence," she urged. "I come of a proud family, the Champneys, of Champney Mere. They are a haughty old race, and—I was in fear of my cousin, whose heir I am, Lord Champney! I had told his lordship that I loved Miss Chessom of Chessom Grange, Sussex, and had told him that she came of a good family and was of gentle blood. He gave his consent, which I asked as a matter of form, to our marriage. And then came your letter to me, declaring your rightful parentage. You can never know what a shock that was to me! Never!"

He paused, as if he were choking with emotion.

"Was it not a shock to me?" asked Dora, with a mournful pathos. "I lost home, name, friends, a position in the world, a tender father and a lover, all at one blow."

"No wonder you thought I deserted you, Dora, and all the while I loved you better than I loved my life," said Wamer, humbly. "My love and my pride battled, but my love won. I went to London, determined to plead for our immediate marriage. I entered your lodgings in time to hear Narr protesting, while half intoxicated, that he should make a speculation of your marriage. A horror and disgust of your relatives came over me. Before that disgust had worn off I had insulted you, as you know but too well. Dora, I went back to Saltair a miserable, heartbroken man. I would that I had died before I had alienated from me the priceless boon of your love. Have you no pity for me? Does not your heart soften to my repentance?"

"Did your heart soften to my sorrow and despair

when you found me with the Narrs in London?" demanded Dora, sternly, her proud, high-bred face severe in its purity and calm rebuke. "You found me with people of whom I know nothing, save that they claimed to be my parents. I had nothing in common with them. In that hour I could have turned to you as a child turns to its rightful home—but you repulsed me! It was not me you loved, Felix Wamer—not plain Dora's self—but the supposed heiress of Mr. Chessom, the well-connected young lady."

"By Heaven—no! The Chessoms are well enough, Dora; but even you, innocent as you are of the laws of society, must know enough of social caste to comprehend that the Chessoms could not afford an equal match with a member of the house of Champney! It was the low connections I shrank from; that vulgar, drinking couple below, with their career as fugitives from justice. Believe me, Dora, I am not so bad as you think me!"

"You need not defend yourself to me, Mr. Wamer, I have no longer a personal interest in your character or thoughts."

Wamer did not seem to hear her. He continued: "I went back to Saltair bearing a poisoned arrow in my heart. I thought the matter over, and all your winsome young beauty came up to my mind like a veritable apparition, and I knew that I had made the mistake of my life, and that I loved you as a man can love but once. Yesterday I received a telegram from Jack Narr, telling me where you were. And I have come to you, Dora, a humble penitent, asking forgiveness and restoration!"

"You are too late!" said the young girl, sighing.

"Too late! Oh, not too late! Oh, Dora, unsay those fatal words! I love you! I love you! You will not cast me off?"

Dora gently unclasped from her dress his clinging fingers. There was a real anguish in his face and voice that touched her to the quick. She felt convinced now that he was sincere, and her tender soul pitied him.

"You pain me, Mr. Wamer," she said softly, her bright young face glooming. "It is all over between us. You yourself cut the tie that united us. Spare me any further words!"

"You cannot mean it, Dora!" cried Wamer, shrilly. "You will let me woo you back to me as gently as a bird woos back its mate? You are lonely and sorrowful, under the guardianship of two hard-hearted and uncongenial persons. Let me lift you out of this bondage. You promised to be my wife. Redeem that promise now. I will buy off those people, so that you shall never see them again. I will marry you at the church altar. I will take you with me to Champney Mere as my honoured and beloved bride, and Lord Champney and the Lady Barbara, his wife, will make you welcome. Marry me, Dora, and your life shall be one dream of joy! You shall never know a care, a sorrow or a burden. I will shield and guard you as something too rare and precious to encounter the rude shocks of life! You shall be to me like some rare exotic flower, or like some glorious tropical bird, made to live in the sunshine! Oh, Dora, marry me, and let me show you how I loved you!"

He pleaded as a man pleads for what is dearer to him than life. His voice trembled with passionate desire. He was terribly in earnest.

Dora's face, with its bright radiance clouded over, its rare piquancy giving place to a sweet seriousness and solemnity, and her great brown eyes—black now—full of tremulous lights and shadows, shone upon her pleading lover with the glory of an unattainable star.

"I believe you are sincere, Mr. Wamer," she said gently, "and I pity you!"

"Pity is akin to love, they say. Don't you love me, Dora? Do you remember the sunny morning when as we sat in the old drawing-room at the Grange, I asked you to be my wife? You looked up at me then with shy blushes, Dora, and whispered assent. Is that love all gone, darling? Have you banished me entirely from your heart? Can a woman love and so soon forget?"

"No, she cannot love and so soon forget," murmured Dora, half unconsciously.

The leaves on the tree by the window rustled, as if the wind was shaking them. Noel was trembling. Dora seemed to be going beyond his reach, decoyed by the false light of this false love. A moan arose to his lips and was changed to a heavy sigh.

But Wamer heard nothing to indicate to him the presence of a listener.

"You have not forgotten, then?" he whispered, beginning to hope, as his hidden rival began to despair. "You love me a little still? Oh, darling, you give me new life. You will marry me?"

He arose and put out his arms to embrace her.

She put him from her by a commanding gesture.

"You mistake me, Mr. Warner," she said, with a pretty girlish digress. "I said that when a woman loves, she cannot so soon forget." But I did not say that I had ever loved."

"You are playing with me."

"No, I am telling you the truth. When you came to Chensom Grange, I was but a child in experience. I was flattered by your gallant attentions and compliments. When you asked me to marry you, I assented. I fancied I loved you, but it was only fancy. After you came to me in London—after I had fled from you and the Narra—I was astonished to find how little I grieved for your loss. I have never shed a tear of regret that you turned out so ill. I have never had one sleepless moment for you! I have never wished for your return! In short, Mr. Warner, as those statements show, I never loved you! There was a time when you might have won my love, but that time is past. Had you come to me in London in tender love and sympathy, you might have won my heart! Now it is too late—for ever too late!"

Warner's cheeks whitened.

"You are in earnest?" he said, huskily.

"In full earnest!"

"Riches, honours, a lovely home, plenty of friends, my love and devotion, our happy marriage—nothing will tempt your heart back to me?"

"Nothing whatever!" said Dora, lowly.

"And I have thrown away the priceless gem with my own hands?"

Dora bowed slowly and pityingly.

Warner turned from her with a groan.

That moment held for him an awful bitterness—the bitterness of a terrible defeat! He had expected to win her back by a show of sorrow and penitence, but though she felt a pity for him, it was not of the kind that is "akin to love."

A little while they stood thus in a dead silence. Dora, looking behind the parted curtain into the shadows of the leaves and branches of the tree, encountered the radiance of a pair of glowing eyes.

Strangely enough, as she had not owned to herself that she loved Mr. Weir, her heart thrilled as it had never thrilled before.

Presently Warner came back to her, and said:

"Dora, is your decision irrevocable?"

The girl blushed as she answered in the affirmative.

"I could give you your freedom, if you would consent to marry me," he urged, eagerly. "Otherwise the Narra will continue to keep you a helpless prisoner here."

"They cannot do so long. This establishment is beyond their means. Once you withdraw your countenance from them, Mr. Warner, and they will give up this cottage and return to lodgings. You know they came here simply on your account, and by your advice."

Warner's face began to harden.

"You deny that you ever loved me, Dora," he said. "Do you love another? That Snaxex chaw-bacon, who presumes on his university education and the fact that he is the son of a country gentleman, and who has been hanging about you since you left the Grange, and till you came here—surely you do not love him?"

"I decline to make you my confidant," said Dora, spiritedly. "I do not recognise your right to question me."

"I have the right of a cast-off lover—the right of your betrothed husband," said Warner, bitterly. "Our engagement has never been dissolved—"

"I dissolve it now, then."

Warner's face became livid, yet he strove to speak calmly.

"Dora, that country clodhopper is no match for you. Your beauty, your purity, your charming ways, your childlike innocence, all constitute a more than royal dowry. You are a match for a king—"

"Last week you did not think me a match for a nobleman's dependant," interposed Dora, with a dash of sarcasm.

A gleam of anger appeared in Warner's eyes. Dora's shaft had gone home.

"You are not generous," he said, hoarsely. "I see, however, that I am too late. Harsher measures may induce you to look at the matter in a different light. I am inclined to leave you to the tender mercies of the Narra. Perhaps after you have had a further taste of their authority and ways, you may think you can do worse than marry me. Your chaw-bacon won't find you here; and if he should the discovery won't benefit him. In England there is a law to punish those who abduct minors from their parents and guardians. He will not dare break the law. Your father has full and entire claim upon you."

"I doubt that Jack Narr is my father," said Dora, coolly.

Warner started.

"What makes you think so?" he demanded.

"My instinct!"

Warner looked relieved.

"Romantic nonsense!" he muttered. "It's hard to come down to the truth, but I don't wonder that it is so. I pity you, Dora. Brought up as you have been, this reverse is terrible. Pardon me the harsh words I have been betrayed into speaking, and believe me your true friend. If you want help and comfort, or if you get tired of this place and these people, let me know. My arms are always open to you. Think the matter over to-night," he added, "and you may have a different answer for me in the morning!"

"You stay here to-night, then?"

"I shall be here a day or two. I will call upon you again to-morrow. Perhaps reflection may teach you wisdom!"

He held out his hand. Dora hesitated, then placed her hand coldly in his.

"You need not wait here for an answer," she said.

"You have my answer already—the only one I shall ever have for you!"

Warner pressed her hand, paused, seeming to be gathering his courage, and then with a sudden movement he caught the sleeve of her gray dress in his fingers and dexterously tore it open to the elbow.

The girl started back, reddening with indignation.

But Warner held her wrist in a fierce grip, and drew it up to the light.

He saw imprinted upon the white soft flesh what he expected.

There it was—a red irregular cross, small and quaint of shape, but perfectly distinct and recognizable.

It was the mark which Lord Champney had described as having been upon the arm of his supposed dead daughter!

Warner uttered an ejaculation that Dora failed to comprehend, and said:

"Forgive me that mad impulse. I am going, Dora, but you may expect me to-morrow."

He hurried out of the room in a strange agitation, locking the door behind him, and giving the key to Mrs. Narr, who was sitting patiently on the stairs.

Then he followed the woman down to the parlour, muttering:

"I see it all! The girl is the daughter that Lord Champney and the Lady Barbara mourn as dead! I see my way clear to an immediate fortune! The girl's spirit must be broken. She must become mine at once, by fair means or foul. I shall stop at nothing!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

In one of the pleasantest parts of Surrey, and but a few miles distant from the Thames, lies the ancestral home of Lord Champney, known as Champney Mere.

The house itself is a grand old mansion, with a magnificent facade, and presents a most imposing appearance. It is flanked by stone terraces, with stone steps, and low, carved balustrades, and it is approached by a wide, lime-shaded avenue, at the foot of which is the great gateway, guarded by a picturesque stone lodge.

There are stately gardens, fine parks, and sunny lawns belonging to Champney Mere, and all these were kept in immaculate order, although Lord Champney had paid the place but flying visits for many years, and although his wife had not been here since the early days of her marriage.

The mere, from which the place took its name, lay to the eastward of the house, and in full sight of its long east windows.

It was a fine clear sheet of water, covering about fifty acres, and its borders were fringed with pollard willows, whose drooping branches trailed on the water, and cast a host of tremulous shadows.

Upon that day, in the latter part of June, which Lord Champney had appointed for his return to the Mere with his wife, the place presented a scene of rare festivity and gladness, such as indeed it had not witnessed since his lordship had brought home his bride, eighteen years before.

The day was lovely. Not a stick, stone, or leaf marred the cleanliness of the wide avenues and walks or the smooth-shaven lawns. The more lay in the glad sunlight, within its fringe of encircling willows, like a glittering and gigantic diamond.

The house itself wore a festive air. Although the house steward had had but two days' warning of the home-coming, the plate-glass windows glittered like jewels, and were shaded by gay Venetian awnings, fresh from London. A flag fluttered from a staff on the topmost turret. The entrance doors were open, and the wide great hall and the grand portico outside were all wreathed with flowers and branches of spicy, odorous pines.

The tenants of the Lord Champney, of whom there

were at least thirty, had gathered with their families to do honour to the return of their landlord. The house servants, who had been attached to the Champney family all their lives, had gotten up this impromptu reception of their master, who, they fondly hoped, had come back to the Mere to spend the remainder of his days; and the tenants had joined in with them with hearty accord, for his lordship was one of those persons who are ever considerate of the rights and wishes of those inferior to himself in point of wealth and station.

At about three o'clock in the afternoon, the tenants had assembled on the lawn in gala attire, the house steward moving about among them and doing the honours of the occasion, with a beaming expression on his portly, rubicund countenance.

"This begins to look like it, Mr. Hodges," he exclaimed, clapping a stout miller familiarly on the shoulder. "We're going to have the old times back again. My lord has done with them heathenish furrin courts, and is going to live at home with my lady like a Christian. You'll see gay doings now, mark my words! Company from London, excursions to abbeys, to the Thames, to where not, and riding and hunting parties, and feasting and jollity—oh! it all seems too good to be true!"

"So it do, Mr. Leffles, so it do!" returned the miller, half growling, half reprovingly. "The way I look at it is this: When a nobleman has a handsome property, clear and uncumbered, I take it it's duty to stay 't home on it, and not go gallivanting off to heathen countries, as my lord has done! Why, I hear strange stories of them Germans, and no good 'em, except that they are good 'at drinking beer, which I take it is the best thing you can say about 'em. Furriners are heathens, anyhow you take 'em. There's no difference between 'em, only some eat frogs and some don't."

The house steward was about to reply to this piece of profound wisdom when the children and young people set up a great shout of joyous welcome.

The carriage was coming!

Mr. Leffles retreated to the house, in the main hall of which the servants were drawn up in phalanx, and placed himself at their head with an expression of the severest dignity on his portly face.

The carriage had been sent to the station to meet the travellers, who had come on from London, having left Saltair on the previous day, and having spent the night in town, stopping at a hotel.

Presently the carriage approached the great gates, which swung open, amid shouts and cries of welcome, and wheeled slowly up the avenue.

Flowers, singly and in bouquets, were showered upon the new-comers, and rained into the open carriage, and the Lady Barbara bowed and smiled right and left, and Lord Champney, pale still from illness and mental pain, took off his hat and waved it in smiling, courteous acknowledgment of the hearty greetings.

"How happy they are!" said little Mrs. Hodges, the miller's wife, discontentedly. "See the white plume on her bonnet flutter! It's plain that my lord does on my lady, and that she has everything that heart can wish for, and not a care in the world. What a difference there is between rich and poor and high and low, to be sure! It's the way of the world, I suppose."

What a farce it all was to his lordship and the Lady Barbara! They happy, and without a care! They had not interchanged a word since they had left Saltair Manor on the previous day. They had occupied different apartments at the London hotel, and were further apart at this moment in heart, than if their bodies were at the opposite poles.

The carriage drew up at the portico, and Lord Champney alighted and gave his hand to the Lady Barbara. The two ascended the steps together.

A moment was given in the hall to greetings of the old family servants, and then the noble couple passed into the drawing-room.

Leffles and the housekeeper followed.

"Leffles," said his lordship, with a ghastly smile, "I have been ill, as you see. I am even now fit to be in bed than out of it. Let the tenants be properly entertained with cakes and ale, and whatever else they want. Let them enjoy themselves, and have a dance on the lawn, if they like. And say to them that Lady Champney and I properly appreciate their cordial and kindly reception, and shall hope to see them all here again at a later period."

Leffles bowed, and withdrew on his errand. The housekeeper, a prim little woman in a black silk gown, brought herself under the Lady Barbara's notice.

"Why, Mrs. Dissitt," said her ladyship, extending her hand with a smile, "you are still housekeeper, as you were eighteen years ago. How little you have changed!"

"And I may say the same to yourself, my lady."

replied Mrs. Bissett, much flattered. "You are looking as young and fair as you did when you came here as a bride! And handsomer, my lady!" she added, enthusiastically. "You look like a queen! Ah! it's easy to see that you are happy."

The Lady Barbara's fair face shadowed a little. She toyed with her glove fastenings, bending her head so that her countenance might not be seen.

"Yes, Bissett," said Lord Champney, with an old laugh, "her ladyship's very happy. And so am I. You haven't complimented me on my bright looks. But about the rooms. Are they ready?"

The housekeeper looked puzzled as she responded, with a courtesy:

"Yes, my lord, but I thought Ladies must have made some mistake. He said your lordship ordered the east rooms to be got ready for my lady, and ordered for your own use a suite in the west wing. And though I thought Ladies must have misunderstood the letter, the rooms are all ready."

"Quite right," said Lord Champney, cutting her explanations short. "There was no mistake. I know the way to my old rooms, and shall not need attendance to them. Bissett, you may show Lady Champney to her own apartments, and be kind enough to attend upon her until the arrival of her maid, who will be here with the luggage soon."

As he concluded, he went out hastily, and sought out his own apartments.

There was a compassionate look in the housekeeper's eyes that touched the pride of the wrongfully suspected wife.

"You may lead the way upstairs, Mrs. Bissett," she said calmly, yet with burning cheeks. "I will go to my rooms."

Mrs. Bissett obeyed.

The "east rooms" were situated directly over the drawing-room, and overlooked the mere. They consisted of three or four apartments, connected by sliding doors, and comprising boudoir, dressing-room, bed-chamber and bath-room.

The windows were long and wide like doors, and opened upon a wide balcony. At the present moment, as the afternoon was sultry, all the windows were ajar, and the room was penetrated with the delicious summer breeze that was scarcely more than a zephyr, yet sufficient to relieve the air of deadness and oppressiveness.

The furniture of the boudoir was upholstered in a pale blue satin, in a fine state of preservation. Flowers crowded the vases, looped up the lace window drapery, and filled the basket frame which took the place of the winter grate. Their perfume was inexpressibly delightful.

The Lady Barbara laid aside her bonnet and wrappings, and sat down in an arm chair by one of the windows.

A host of memories thronged into her mind as she sat there, and held her silent.

She had come to Champney mere a bride, fresh from the marriage altar. These had been her bridal rooms. Sidney had fitted them up for her before her marriage. She remembered that he had chosen the pale blue satin upholstery, because, as he had said, it contrasted so perfectly with her dazzling complexion and hair of pure pale gold.

How everything had changed since then!

Mrs. Bissett, solicitous for her lady's satisfaction, hastened to say:

"I have taken care of these rooms myself, my lady, since you were here. The rooms have been kept dark, and the furniture hasn't faded. But I suppose your ladyship will fit up your rooms in modern style?"

"I dare say," said her ladyship, carelessly. "Yet I like them as they are. What is that noise, Mrs. Bissett? Wheels?"

The housekeeper went to the front window.

"It's the trunks, my lady," she said. "I will order them brought up."

She hastened to do so.

The Lady Barbara went into her dressing-room and lay down upon a couch. What thoughts occupied her mind no one could know, but the tears dropped softly on the cushions pillowing her head, and her lips quivered in a mortal grief.

An hour later she arose and began her toilette, her maid having arrived with the trunks.

"I have tried pleadings and protestations with Sidney," she thought, bitterly, as her toilette progressed, "and all is over between us. Yet I would like to show him that though he rejects me through jealousy, he must yet admire me! And Heaven knows, if I cannot have his love I would like to compel his admiration!"

She debated the momentous question of what she should wear. Having settled it at last, she arrayed herself for dinner.

Her dress was simple enough, as it seemed, when she had finished, but it was in exquisite taste and exquisitely becoming. It was of white tulle, over

white silk, all puffs and fleecy folds, cut with a graceful train. The white silk corage was cut low, and the tulle softly veiled the sloping shoulders and the white, rounded arms, enhancing their beauty by the half-pretence of concealment. An elaborate white sash lent its charm to the toilette, and a handful of water-lilies from the mere clustered at the lady's throat.

"Sidney will like me in this," she thought, with a half-smile. "He always liked to see me in white."

At the dinner-hour she descended alone to the dining-hall. Lord Champney was there already, and met her at the door, giving her his arm and leading her to the table.

The room was stately, and just now irradiated by the glowing sunset rays. The glitter of silver and crystal, and the soft glimmer of dainty porcelain upon the snowy damask, made a brilliant centre to the grand old room.

The meal went on, his lordship doing his part courteously, and the Lady Barbara exerting herself to keep up her reputation for wit and brilliancy. More than once she caught an admiring glance from her husband's eyes, and those intercepted glances were like draughts of wine to a fainting person.

The dinner over, Lord Champney gave his wife his arm, and conducted her to the drawing-room.

"The merry-makers have all gone home," he said. "We are left to ourselves at last. The mere will seem dull to you after the gaiety of Bissett, and I begin to fear you will be homesick."

"I think not," replied her ladyship, carelessly, "as long as I have books, a piano, needles, and drawing materials. I am a woman of considerable resources, and am never at a loss to entertain myself."

"You are fortunate," said Lord Champney, moving restlessly back and forth. "Ada comes in to town selecting her wedding dress, and you and I, Barbara, are two loveless persons shut up together here, caring nothing for each other, and about to be moped to death. I declare I half-envied Willard Ames and Ada this morning, as they sat together at Mrs. Estway's, planning their happy future. I wonder if Ames' life will turn out like mine!"

"Impossible!" said Lady Champney. "Willard Ames will commence his married life with an implicit trust in his wife!"

"And so I began mine!" returned his lordship, his lip curling. "But he who pins his trust to a woman's constancy writes his name on the sand, where the next wave will sweep it away! He had better not marry; but, marrying, he should provide his wife with a duenna!"

Lady Barbara's face glowed redly, but she did not reply. She was beginning to grow patient with her husband's weakness.

"Shall I sing to you, Sidney?" she asked.

"If you will. It is years since I heard your voice in song!"

The wife sat down at the grand piano, and played and sang some of the songs she had sung in that room years before and her tears dropped silently on the keys, while her voice thrilled through some of the quaint old ballads Lord Champney loved.

When she arose and returned to her seat, she saw that he was weeping silently, his eyes shaded by his hands.

With a sudden impulse, she went to him, and laid her hand on his forehead.

He trembled under her touch. He looked up at her with a sudden and passionate devotion.

"Oh, Barbara!" he exclaimed, with a moaning cry.

"If I could only wake up and find it all a hideous dream!"

"If it only were!" sighed the wife. "But the past can never come back, Sidney. We can never be more to each other than strangers. How vividly this coming back to the mere brings it all back—our happy early married days! Ah!"

She started back abruptly, as if a serpent had bitten her.

"What is it, Barbara?" cried his lordship, in alarm.

She faced him, pale, stern, and anxious. Then she slowly retreated to the further window, shivering as if with ague.

"Never mind me, Sidney!" she answered, in an altered voice, and without an indication of feeling. "Only let me alone. There should be no sentiment between us!"

Lord Champney regarded her in amazement. She seemed suddenly to have withdrawn herself far from him.

At the same moment the sight that had so disturbed her ladyship appeared again, blanching her cheeks.

It was only the figure of a man sauntering under the pollard willows by the mere.

But the man was her enemy—Colonel Effingham.

(To be continued.)

THE measures of our Government with respect to the army may be summed up in a line. In summer they boastfully reduce military expenditure by the sum of one million! and in the autumn they ask Parliament for two millions, simply to repair the mischief they had done.—United Service Gazette

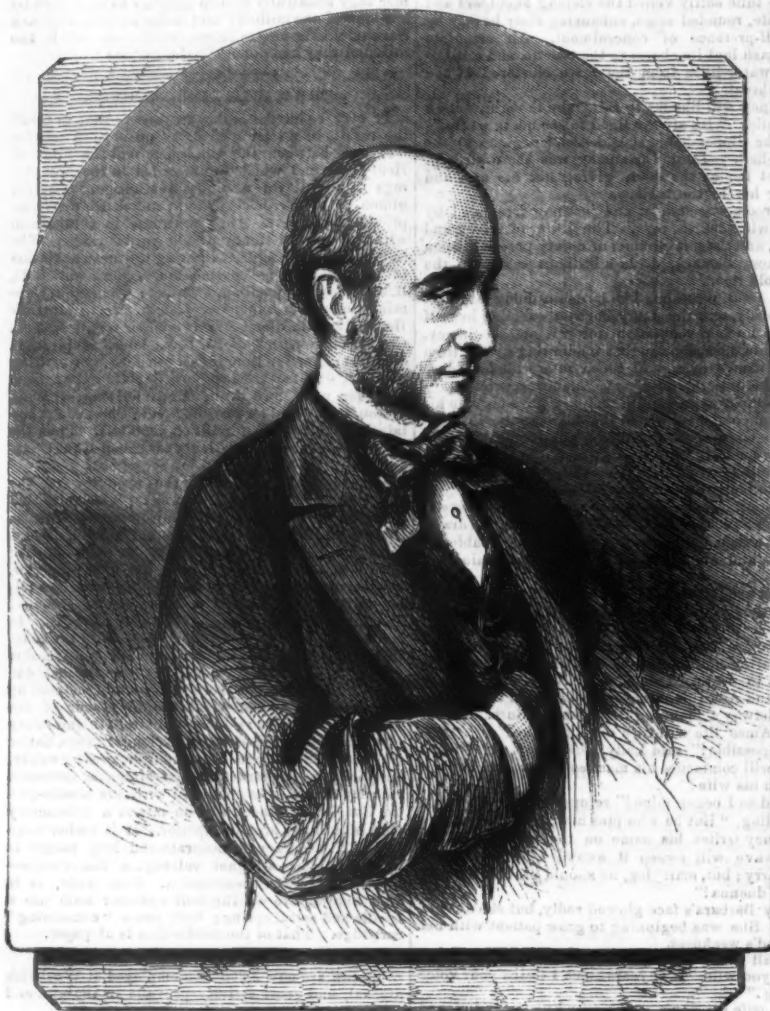
THE MARTINI-HENRY RIFLE.

It may be interesting at the present time to recall the results of a trial which was made at Woolwich last year between the Chassepot and the Martini-Henry rifle, and which are recorded in the proceedings of the Royal Artillery Institution, Captain Simon, of the French Artillery, submitted three improved Chassepots. They were fired in comparison with the Martini-Henry at 500 yards' range. The following are the figures, showing the mean deviation of twenty shots:—Martini-Henry, Sergeant Bott, R.M., kneeling position, 1'03 feet; Chassepot, Captain Simon, from shoulder rest, 2'78 feet; Martini-Henry, Captain Simon, from shoulder rest, 0'97 feet; Chassepot, Sergeant Bott, R.M., kneeling position, 3'02 feet; Martini-Henry, Edward Ross, Esq., sitting position, 0'36 feet; Chassepot, Captain Simon, from shoulder rest, 2'78 feet; Martini-Henry, Captain Simon, from shoulder rest, 1'62 feet; Chassepot, Captain Mackintosh, sitting position, 2'38 feet. Thus the accuracy of the Martini-Henry far excelled the Chassepot.

We may also add that the accuracy of the Chassepot, as here exhibited, was far inferior to that of the Snider rifle. Height of trajectory at 500 yards; Chassepot, 10 feet at highest point; Martini-Henry, 6 feet 2 inches at highest point. In simplicity of manipulation the latter arm is also superior. Twenty rounds were fired for rapidity with the following results:—Chassepot, 1 minute 42 seconds; Martini-Henry, 48 seconds. The only advantage in favour of the Chassepot as compared with the Martini-Henry is in the lightness of its ammunition, due mainly to the bullet weighing 380 against 430 grains. This is much more than counterbalanced by the following points, which are in favour of the Martini-Henry arm:—Increased strength and safety of ammunition; greater accuracy, longer range, flatter trajectory; higher penetrative power, greater safety, simplicity of construction and strength, increased rapidity of fire. As compared with the needle-gun the Chassepot, although by no means a satisfactory type of military arm, is superior. It is rather more rapid. Its accuracy at moderate and long ranges is inferior. It has a higher velocity, a flatter trajectory, and greater penetration. Both guns, as is well known, are on the bolt system; both use a needle and spiral spring; both fire a "consuming" cartridge. That of the needle-gun is of paper.

THERE are now 5,300 men employed at Woolwich arsenal, and great activity prevails in the gun and shell factories.

HUMAN ENERGY.—In fact, food is to the animal what fuel is to the engine, only an animal is a much more economical producer of work than an engine. Rumford justly observed that we shall get more work out of a ton of hay if we give it as food to a horse than if we burn it as fuel in an engine. It is in truth the combustion of our food that furnishes our frames with energy, and there is no food capable of nourishing our bodies which, if well dried, is not also capable of being burned in the fire. Having thus traced the energy of our frames to the food which we eat, we next ask whence does this food derive its energy. If we are vegetarians we need not trouble ourselves to go further back, but if we have eaten animal food and have transferred part of the energy of an ox or of a sheep into our own systems, we ask whence has the ox or the sheep derived its energy, and answer, undoubtedly from the food which it consumes, this food being a vegetable. Ultimately, then, we are led to look to the vegetable kingdom as the source of that great energy which our frames possess in common with those of the inferior animals, and we have now only to go back one more step and ask whence vegetables derive the energy which they possess. In answering this question, let us endeavour to ascertain what really takes place in the leaves of vegetables. A leaf is, in fact, a laboratory in which the active agent is the sun's rays. A certain species of solar ray enters this laboratory, and immediately commences to decompose carbonic acid into its constituents oxygen and carbon, allowing the oxygen to escape into the air while the carbon is, in some shape, worked up and assimilated. First of all, then, in this wondrous laboratory of Nature, we have a quantity of carbonic acid drawn in from the air; this is the raw material. Next, we have the source of energy, the active agent: this is light. Thirdly, we have the useful product: that is the assimilated carbon. Fourthly, we have the product dismissed into the air, and that is oxygen.



[M. BENEDETTI.]

THE LATE FRENCH AMBASSADOR AT BERLIN.

M. BENEDETTI, M. Bismark, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of the French make a quartette answerable before their contemporaries and history as the chief concocters and originators of the guilty war now raging on the Continent. These plotting statesmen and ambitious sovereigns have committed the heinous crime of letting "loose the dogs of war," without any justifiable cause, to ravage two nations standing in the forefront of the world's civilisation; they have thrown Europe back into the barbarism of settling disputed questions of international comity by that terrible exponent of the "last logic of kings," the cannon's mouth, and made right and wrong become again, what the progress of the age demands they should be no longer, a mere matter of brute force and cannon-balls. The guilt of the war lies on their heads; we will not here seek to apportion the share of each; that it is wiser to leave to the impartial verdict of history; but we must pronounce in the strongest manner our horror of the *batue* of blood to which these four men have committed their respective nations.

M. Benedetti, as the representative of the Emperor Napoleon III., and M. Bismark, as the *alter ego* of King William I., were the first to appear in the sanguinary drama now being enacted before the eyes of the world; and both are men of Machiavellian minds and practised in statecraft, though the Prussian is superior to the Frenchman in wiliness and depth of intention, as the last trial of skill between them—the now world-famous "projected treaty" has clearly shown.

Vincent Benedetti, of Italian extraction, was born in Corsica about 1815, and educated for the consular and diplomatic service. After having been appointed

consul at Palermo in 1848, he became First Secretary to the Embassy at Constantinople, until May, 1859, when he was appointed to replace M. Bourée as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister at Teheran. M. Benedetti, who declined to accept the office, was some months afterwards named Director of Political Affairs to the Foreign Minister; a position associated with the successful career of MM. de Rayneval and d'Hauterive, and with the names of Desages, Armand, Lefebvre, and Thouvenel. It fell to the lot of M. Benedetti to act as secretary and editor of the protocols in the Congress of Paris in 1856, and he was made Chevalier of the Legion of Honour in June, 1845, Officer in 1853, Commander in 1856, and Grand Officer in June, 1860. Having been appointed Minister Plenipotentiary of France at Turin in 1861, on the recognition of the Italian kingdom by the French Government, he resigned when M. Thouvenel retired from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was appointed Ambassador at Berlin, Nov. 27, 1864.

At Berlin M. Benedetti remained until the outbreak of the war, of which his language to the King of Prussia is considered to have been the proximate cause. The version of the celebrated interview between the king and Benedetti current at Ems, where it took place, is worthy of note. The head and front of King William's offending, in the opinion of Paris, was, that he had refused to discuss the demands of the Imperial Government with the French Ambassador in the public promenade, and subsequently declined to receive that official. It never occurred to the Parisians that, had the king acted otherwise, he would be at this moment the most unpopular instead of the most popular man in Germany. The fact is that M. Benedetti, by acceding the king abruptly on the promenade, committed a breach of Court etiquette and a grave abuse of his ambassadorial position. His conduct, to the Prussian ap-

prehension, admits but of one interpretation—namely, that he was acting under instructions to bring about a rupture between France and Prussia *à tout prix*. M. Benedetti is a diplomatist of some experience, gained chiefly in Prussia. No man has had fuller opportunity than he to become acquainted with the rigid punctiliousness of the Prussian Royal Family and Court in all matters of etiquette; and that he, of all men, should have utterly disregarded conventional precedent at so critical a moment is extraordinary. Had M. Benedetti asked for an audience in the customary manner, before the scene on the promenade, probably his request would have been granted—with what result we shall never know; but the king would, it is alleged at Berlin, have received him with all the courtesy due to his exalted position as the French Emperor's personal representative. After that deplorable *eccandore*, however, his reception was simply out of the question. The king, who during his long life has conducted himself towards everybody around him with lofty dignity, retired to his apartments in high indignation; and when M. Benedetti applied for an audience, half-an-hour later, Col. Count Lehndorff, one of his Majesty's aides-de-camp, was instructed to inform the French Ambassador that the king declined to see him then or thereafter. This is the view taken of this momentous incident by the Prussians; but it is not that which is taken by the French. The real truth of the matter has not been got at, it is evident; and it has even been positively asserted that the alleged interview never took place at all.

The subject of the negotiations was the acceptance of the Spanish Crown by the Prussian prince, Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen; but it is alleged that the renunciation of the Spanish Crown by the Prince of Hohenzollern was only a secondary question, as France would have prevented his ascending the throne. The chief thing demanded was that the King of Prussia, in an autograph letter to the Emperor Napoleon, should make an apology for what had happened, and that this letter, which was to be made public, should contain no mention of the relationship between the Prince of Hohenzollern and the Imperial family. This King William refused to do, and thereupon the following telegram appeared in the German and other papers:

"After the official announcement made to the French Government on the part of the Spanish Government respecting the renunciation of the Prince of Hohenzollern, M. Benedetti had demanded further from the king authorisation to telegraph to Paris, that his Majesty bound himself never to permit for the future that the Prince of Hohenzollern should become a candidate to the Spanish throne. The king thereupon declined to receive the French Ambassador again, and sent him word by an orderly on duty that he had nothing further to communicate to him."

Here was the fount and origin of the evil: the French ambassador had not only been snubbed by the King of Prussia, but the fact had been published to all the world by telegraph. The Government of the Emperor considered the incident to be an unpardonable insult to the honour of France; and war was accordingly proclaimed from Paris to avenge it. Humanity has never been afflicted, however, with a war upon less justifiable grounds.

ASIATIC RUSSIA.

AN Indian contemporary prints a translation of a paper published by the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, in which the author, Mr. W. Venuikof, presents "Statistical Data on the Area of Asiatic Russia," and makes a total of 5,788,799 square miles, British measure. To this large extent east and west Siberia, with the islands of the Arctic and Pacific Oceans, contribute 5,000,020 square miles; the rest is made up of the country of the Orenburg Kirghizes, and the Kirghizes of the Jaxartes, and the trans-Chui land. The length of the Arctic coast from the Kara-Bight to Behring's Strait is 7,333 miles; the Pacific coast has 6,067 miles; and the shores of the Caspian and the Aral may be reckoned as 1,167 miles. Considering that one half of the Siberian waters are not available for navigation, the proportion is one linear mile of coast to 790 square miles of country, a condition "as unfavourable as in the case of purely continental Africa."

On the other hand, there are fourteen of the inland lakes, which, in all, have an area of nearly 33,000 square miles, where navigation and fishing may be carried on, besides the great rivers of Siberia affording water communication over a prodigious extent of country, from the Pacific to the foot of the Ural mountains, and from Turukhansk to Barnaul, Kiakhta, and the valley of the Amou. But, unless mere big game has a value, the greater part of Asiatic Russia will be unprofitable. Of land "unsuitable for settled life," the quantity, according to Mr. Venuikof, amounts to 3,764,930 square miles.



[TREACHERY.]

MONTROSE; OR, THE RED KNIGHT

CHAPTER X.

Then his heart was hot within him,
Like a living coal his heart was. . .
Then began the deadly conflict,
Hand to hand. . .
Till the earth shook with the tumult
And confusion of the battle,
And the air was full of shouting. *Hiawatha.*

It was evening, and the Emir of the Black Tower sat upon his cushion, and about him were both Syrians and Franks, now engaged in a common cause.

"How many Christian citizens of Lystra have we shut up in our dungeons?" asked Marouf of one of his attendants.

"Full two score," was the reply.

"Are any of the leaders of the people still at large?"

"Only such as are at Montrose Castle."

"Aha! Speaking of the castle reminds me of the earl. I cannot hope that his stubborn will hath been bent."

"I think not, emir."

"Assad hath him in charge?"

"Yes."

"When saw you Assad?"

"I saw him at the close of yesterday; and he then told me that the earl was dying. The stout knight had lived without food or drink beyond all belief; but the end had come. The last effort of expiring vitality had been made."

"That was four-and-twenty hours ago?"

"Yes."

"Then Sir Darwin hath ere this ceased to breathe?"

"We may so set it down."

"Let us see Assad. Where is he?"

At this point another of the Saracen attendants came forward, and said:

"Assad went out last night, emir—went to the town on business—and I doubt if he be yet returned. But I heard him say that his prisoner was dead."

"Then I call Allah to witness that the earl hath been his own destroyer. I offered him life, and he would not take it. I offered him all that lay in my power to offer. I could not offer him liberty while a deadly enmity was in his heart."

And all present acknowledged the truth of the emir's statement.

"And now," pursued Marouf, "let us see the bishop. If we can bring him to our aid we may count upon an easy conquest of his flock."

Two of the attendants went out, and when they returned they bore the aged bishop between them. The churchman was worn and wan, but the light of his eye was not dimmed; nor did he bow before the Moslem chief like one who feared.

"Hubert de Balzan," spoke the emir, "the people of thy flock are doomed; and yet I would save them. It pleaseth me not to strike them with death; far rather would I give them life. But if they live, they must live as friends of Islam. Thou, Hubert, canst lead them in the way of life. One word from thy lips may save them. Wilt thou speak it?"

"What is the word, emir?"

"Islam!" replied Marouf.

"I will speak it only to denounce it," said the bishop, calmly and firmly.

"Have a care, Hubert! If thou refusest thus flatly, I shall put thee to a fearful test."

"I have spoken."

"And yet, I will give thee one more opportunity to recant from the dictates of thine own judgment. Signify, even by a nod, that the crusade in which thou hast been engaged is unholy and unjust, and thy people shall live."

The old man folded his arms upon his breast, and raised his tall form in stern, defiant bearing.

"Emir, I have spoken. My life is in your power; but over my conscience you can exert no sway. Strike when it pleaseth thee."

"I will prepare to strike now, Hubert de Balzan; but not as thou thinkest. What ho! Bring in the prisoners!"

Ere long twelve Christians of Lystra were led into the presence of the emir, with ropes around their necks, and their arms pinioned. They were one family, and dear friends of the bishop, whose roof had sheltered him many a time and oft. There were the father and mother, and ten children. The father—Richard Noel—had once been in Hubert's service; but lately he had been a justice in Lystra, and at the head of the civil tribunal.

The bishop gazed upon these new-comers, and then he looked upon the emir; and a glimpse of the dreadful intent flashed upon him. His frame shook, and his hands were clasped convulsively. Marouf marked his emotion, with a look of satisfaction.

"Hubert de Balzan," he said, "I told thee I was prepared to strike. Thy friend and his family, whom thou now beholdest before thee, are doomed to death. Thou alone hast the power to save them!"

"And wherefore, emir, are they doomed?"

"As enemies of Islam."

"Marouf, thou dare not do this wicked thing."

"By Allah! thou shalt see."

"They have done thee no harm. They are—"

"Silence, bishop! Enough for thee to know that they are doomed, and that thou canst save them. Speak but the word I would have thee speak, and they shall be spared."

"Benighted mortal," replied Hubert, with calm and reverential dignity, "they are in the hands of One mightier than thou. Ask them if they would purchase a few short hours of life in this vale of trial at the expense of eternal bliss."

"Fool!" cried the emir, "I will ask them nothing. I will put thee to the test. If Heaven hath given thee assurance of eternal things, thou art indeed wondrously informed. But thou hast no such assurance. It is but the fancy of an overwrought imagination. There is but one God, and Mahomet is his Prophet! Speak those words of true faith, and both thou and thy friends shall be spared."

"And if I speak them not?"

"Then thou shalt, with thine own eyes, behold the infliction of the death which thou hast put upon them. The executioners are at hand. Speak!"

Hubert de Balzan knew too well that the emir was not trifling. He knew how oft the Moslem chieftain's hand had been dipped in Christian blood; and he knew that the Arab was fond of the sacrifice. He turned from the Saracen to Richard Noel, and when he beheld the dear ones whom he so fondly loved, his eyes were filled with tears. Noel saw, and he could no longer restrain himself.

"My lord bishop," he said, "risk not thy soul. Far better that we join the redeemed in heaven, than that we accept the life which this man offers. We are ready to die for Heaven!"

"Say ye so?" exclaimed Marouf.

"It is enough!" said Hubert. "Do thy work as thou wilt."

"Blind, foolish man! thou hast not considered. Wouldst thou behold those loved ones of thine die before thy face—die inch by inch—die one at a time—dragging the terrible scene of agony and death through long hours? Wilt thou look calmly on and see all this, when a word of thine may prevent it?"

"Emir," replied the bishop, promptly and firmly, "we can serve but one master. It must be God or Satan. In God's service we will abide! I have spoken."

"Then," cried Marouf, starting to his feet, "thou shalt behold the fruits of thy stubborn will! Thou shalt see these friends of thine struggle and die, one by one; and no cry for mercy from their lips shall be heard. But a cry from thy lips we will heed."

At a sign from the emir four stout men came forward, and one of them spread a black cloth upon the pavement before the divan. The aged bishop saw and he folded his hands and prayed.

"Which shall die first?" asked the chief executioner.

"Let it be the youngest. I would spare the weakest the pain of beholding the death of their elders."

And this youngest was a fair-haired girl of not more than three years. Then there was another girl not more than five years old. Then came two boys—then another girl—and then a boy. Then there were two maidens—and then came a son, Rufus—a youth of two-and-twenty—who had been captured with difficulty, and whose bonds were strong and secure.

"Fiend!" cried Noel, in a vain attempt to burst his bonds, "thou wilt not harm that sweet child! In Heaven's name, spare her!"

"I will listen to the bishop—not to thee," replied Marouf.

But the bishop did not speak. He alone of all the prisoners was unbound; and yet he was the most dangerous. But the wily emir had fancied that he would be more easily swayed than he could have been in bonds.

The mother had stood like one from whom the sense of feeling had departed; but now she revived, and took a step forward.

"Great emir," she said, "if on this earth you have a child, by the love you bear it, I pray you spare my dear one! She hath done you no wrong."

The emir shook his head.

"Oh!" pleaded the agonised mother, "have you no heart? Is there no room for pity in your bosom?"

"Ask the bishop. He can save the child,—he can save you all. Ask him if he hath a heart. By Allah! he should be the man to speak—not I."

But the bishop did not speak; nor did the mother appeal to him. Strong hands drew her back, and she shrank and quivered, and covered her face with her hands. She knew the character of the Moslem tyrant too well. She had seen too much blood spilled to find room for the hope that these dark men would hesitate to spill more. The hand all about her was red with blood, and red stains were upon every threshold. Once more the swart chieftain raised his hand, and the child was thrown upon the black cloth. The mother heard the little wail of terror, and with an expiring cry she fell back senseless.

The fainting of the woman called attention for the moment to the place where two men were supporting her; and in that moment Hubert de Balzan leaped upon the Saracen nearest him; knocked him down with one blow of his fist; and grasped his sharp scimiter. Quick as thought he cleft the neck of another, and gained another weapon; and, before his movement could be comprehended, he had cut the bonds of both Richard Noel and his son Rufus. The second sword he gave to the father, and then he struck the head of the man who held the little child. Rufus Noel saw and understood, and as the stricken man sank forward at the girl's feet, he caught the sword from the relaxing grasp, and drove it through the heart of the second man who had knelt to hold his sister.

With every energy strong, and with thought inspired by the dire necessity of the situation, the bishop bore back towards the entrance to the apartment, avoiding the blows that were aimed at him, and striking down one more Saracen on his way. Father and son were by his side, gifted with a power such as men may feel but once in a lifetime; and ready now to sell life at only the most fearful cost. And those lives, for the while, seemed charmed,—charmed by the audacity that dazzled the enemy, and by the incomprehensible movement, that puzzled and astounded.

All told, there had been twelve of the emir's force in the room—twelve stout, bold men,—more than enough, as had been thought, for the work in hand; for all the prisoners had been bound save the bishop; and he, poor old man, weak and wan from close confinement in a noisome cell, had been held as no more than a sick woman. The introduction of the justice's family had served to somewhat crowd an apart-

ment not over-large, and hence the Moslem guards were not able to rally with precision. The bound prisoners were in their way; and, moreover, it was some little time ere they could collect their startled and scattered senses sufficiently for an understanding of the strange business; and during that little time three bold and desperate men, striking for far more than life—striking for the helpless ones that stood under bonds and doom before them—were able to do much. These three gleaming scimiters flashed like lightning in the lamplight; and when the bishop had reached the door three Saracens and two traitorous Franks had gone down.

Marouf seemed at first like one who is awaking from a terrible incubus. He could not believe his eyes. He could not comprehend. But he saw at length, and drawing his light sword, he started down from the raised dais upon which his divan stood.

"Strike the dogs," he cried, pressing forward. "Let it be death now to the whole brood! A score of silver pieces to him who strikes the bishop!"

Wounded in many places, but not seriously hurt, the bishop stood with his back to the wall, and struck down those who pressed upon him. Against the same wall stood the father and the son—no chance to surround them—fighting with a might that was irresistible.

"Saint Peter!" shouted the bishop.

"Press the Christian dog to death!" answered Marouf.

"To die thus is to live for ever!" responded Hubert.

And in his fiery zeal he struck a turbulent Moslem down before him.

When the emir saw that his men were falling, and that the three Christians were as strong as ever, he did what he should have done before—he sprang to a side door and called for help; and as he called, he wondered why the loud clashing and clang of steel had not ere this attracted his soldiers to his aid.

Hark! What sound is that?

There is other clashing and clanging; and other voices are shouting the battle-cry.

The Saracens, as they heard the fearful din, drew back, and the three Christian warriors took breath.

It came nearer and nearer, and grew louder and louder. There was clashing of arms, and there were loud and angry cries.

"The prisoners have broken loose," said one.

"No!" shouted the emir; "it is not so. There's treachery in the wind. By the beard of the Prophet! if we have been betrayed, every Christian dog in the tower shall die! Stand back from the door. I will go and see. Back! I say."

CHAPTER XI.

Oh, par'en me, my friend,
If I so long have kept this secret from thee:
But silence is the charm that guards such treasons.

THE shadows of evening had deepened and darkened into night when Bertram and the six villagers reached the town; and while the latter went to summon their companions, the esquire repaired to the cot of old Barbara, where the others were to join him. In the apartment which he had before used, carefully locked up in a secret closet, he found a number of Saracen garbs, some of them being such as were worn by officers, and others the garbs of common soldiers. With the help of the widow he selected and prepared six of these, and by the time the work was done Philip Vinay made his appearance, and with him came Paul Nogent, an Esquire of the Temple, who had been a military attendant upon the bishop. This man was a stout soldier and a good officer, and was ready to face death in any shape in the service of his good master. And with these two came a score of brave and devoted men; and they reported that others were on their way. Six of the stoutest and most clear-headed—Vinay and Nogent being of the number, were selected to don the Saracen garbs.

"My plan," explained Bertram, while he darkened the face of Vinay with a decoction of cedar bark, "is, that you who have the Saracen disguises shall go in advance, and open the gates of the Black Tower. If you are careful and discreet there can be no difficulty. Marouf is expecting friends from Damascus, who are liable to arrive at any time. You have been within the tower?"

"Yes," answered Philip.

"And I have been there several times," added Nogent.

"Then," pursued Bertram, "when you have passed the outer barrier, your way will be plain before you. I need not tell you of the difficulties you will encounter. When once within the stronghold it must

be war to the death if you are opposed. Save the bishop and the earl first, because they will be the two whom the Saracens will seek most obdurately to hold."

"I think I understand the needs of the occasion," said Nogent.

"Paul and I will work together," added Vinay.

"Then I can help you no more," continued Bertram. "I would accompany you if I could; but I must not leave the castle. You know your men better than I do, and can handle them as they need. Heaven give you success."

By this time the whole party had arrived, and there were assembled in the rear court of the widow's house a hundred men, all well armed, and each prepared to sell his life for the success of the cause in which he was engaged. Bertram saw all in readiness, and then took his leave. More than once he stopped, with the impulse strong upon him to join the adventurers, and go with them upon their important mission; but his duty in another quarter was urgent; and, moreover, he knew that both Philip Vinay and Paul Nogent were able and reliable.

Nogent, as an Esquire of the Temple, had seen more and harder service than had Vinay, and was, perhaps, a more accomplished officer; but Philip was best acquainted with the temper of the men they were to lead, and to him Paul gave the command.

Previous to setting forth it was impressed upon the men that great caution and circumspection were necessary. The six who wore the disguises of Musulmen were to go on in advance, and the others were to follow in squads, each under its own subordinate leader.

"But," concluded Philip, "let there be no delay in reaching the tower; and let no man expose himself until the signal is given. We six will ascend boldly by the open path; but the others must keep under cover of the rocks and the trees; and when all have gained the cedar grove east of the baraban, the leader of the first squad will give me the signal."

The men understood, and pledged themselves anew to be firm and true. Then Philip and his five disguised companions went forth into the street, and the others followed, in small detachments, as had been arranged. They took different routes from the town, but struck one path at the entrance to a deep, narrow ravine at the foot of the mountain. Philip and Paul moved on side by side, and at length reached the edge of the broad table of rock upon which were the outer works of the tower. The grim fortress loomed up darkly before them, and through a few of the upper loop-holes lights gleamed, like ghostly eyes peering out into the night. To their right lay the thicket of cedars, and after waiting some time with becoming patience they heard a low whistle from the grove.

"Our men are at hand," whispered Paul.

"And from their cover they can see when the gates are opened," added Philip.

"Aye,—and be sure they will not lag behind."

And then the six seeming Musulmen ascended to the gate, and Philip blew a blast upon the horn. Ere long a wicket was opened, and a voice demanded:

"Who comes there?"

"Fiends!" returned Philip.

"Give me the signal."

"We have no other signal than this: We are six messengers from Damascus, sent by our illustrious Sultān, Malek-Adel,—whom may Allah preserve—unto the Emir Marouf. Our business is of importance."

Upon this another wicket was opened, and a torch thrust forth, by the light of which the guard were enabled to examine the applicants. And the result of the examination was evidently satisfactory, for shortly afterwards the gate was thrown open, and the man with the torch came out and stood upon the bridge to light the way. There were only two of these guards in sight, and Paul whispered into Philip's ear that they had better dispose of them quickly. "You take the torch-bearer, and I will take the other."

A simple sign was sufficient to inform the other four of what was to be done, and without noise the work was accomplished. Philip possessed himself of the torch, and hurried his bearer backward from the bridge, while the second guard was knocked down by Paul, and quickly sent over into the yawning abyss.

By this time the men had come crowding up from the thicket, and when Philip saw that his forces were at hand, he gave the signal for advance:

Philip and Paul led the way. The great door of the main tower, beneath its lowering arch, was open,

and when our adventurers entered the hall they found a full score of Moslem soldiers there.

"Ha! Men of Damascus!" cried an officer of the tower, starting back aghast, "why bring ye these Christian dogs at your backs? Is this treachery?"

"We are not of Damascus," replied Philip, "but of Lystra; and we are none of us of your infidel brood, but all Christians."

"Then what do you here?"

"We are come for our friends of whom you have robbed us!"

"What ho! Sons of Islam, cut down the intruders!"

The Saracens had not observed the number of the Christians, or they might have been more cautious in their attack. As it was, they went down like stalks of corn before the knife of the reaper. Each man of the villagers, under guidance of Paul Nogent, had taken the precaution to wrap his left arm in a thick padding of quilted cotton stuff, thus making that limb serve as a complete and ready buckler. And this simple bit of armour saved the Christians many wounds, and many lives, as the light scimitars of the Moslems were thus readily turned aside by the cool and determined invaders.

At length a Saracen officer, bleeding from a severe wound upon the arm, discovered that himself and a single companion were alone left; and, sounding a loud alarm, he turned towards a door behind him, and disappeared. But the Christians pressed closely after him, Philip Vinay being within reaching distance.

Beyond this door was a wide hall, and here they met Marouf, while from other open ways came a score of wounded-stricken Arabs.

"How now?" demanded the emir, whose eyes fell first upon his own officer.

"We are beset by a Christian host!"

"Christians! Who opened the gate?"

"I know not, my lord. But you can see that some of them came disguised as men of Damascus."

"The vile dogs! Cut them down!"

It was an order very easily given, but not so easy of accomplishment; and Marouf himself, when the words had escaped his lips, seemed to comprehend the situation; for, with a bitter curse upon his fate, he started back, as though to retreat. But he was not suffered to retreat far. Those of his soldiers who stood with him were either cut down or secured; and finally, after a desperate resistance, during which he slew two of his assailants, he was overpowered, and placed in bonds.

Philip had seen the emir safely disposed of, when an exclamation from Paul Nogent arrested his attention, and upon looking around he beheld Hubert de Balzan approaching from an open door. The bishop's robe was rent and soiled, and his face and hands fearfully bespattered and smeared. And behind the bishop came Richard Noel and his eldest son, also covered with the red stains of battle.

At the same time, however, others of the garrison, not knowing what had happened to occasion the disturbance, came crowding in from the adjacent passages; and as they came in detached numbers, all unconscious of the dangers that threatened, they were easily overcome.

And thus, in a brief space, and with the loss of but few men, the Christians had obtained complete conquest; and, save a few who might have hidden away in their terror, the Moslems were all either slain or secured.

The wife and children of Richard Noel were safe, and when they had been properly cared for, the bishop told his story.

"It was Heaven who sent you," he said; "for we could not have held out much longer. My wounds were not severe—mere scratches—but I was losing my strength. Good Paul! good Philip!—good men all!—I owe you much."

"Thank Heaven thou art saved!" fervently ejaculated Philip. "But there is another. Was the noble earl with you?"

The bishop's countenance fell, and a groan escaped him.

"Was Sir Darwin with you, my lord, in your fray?"

"No, no, Philip. I have not seen him."

"But he is here—he is in this tower."

"Alas! he has been!"

"How, my lord? Speak! Is the earl dead?"

"I can only tell you that I heard speech which signified as much. But I may not have understood. Heaven grant my ears deceived me. Go you and search. From some of your prisoners you will learn where the keys of the dungeon may be found."

Accompanied by a dozen of his men, some of whom bore torches, Philip Vinay turned towards

the hall where the prisoners had been placed under guard. Among the dead that lay upon the pavement and among these prisoners were men who had been Christians—men who had forsaken their Creator and joined the Saracen host. The rest of these recreants would have been slain by the incensed villagers had not Philip interfered. Without much trouble the keys of the tower were found, and they found also a Saracen, who was persuaded, by promise of life, to guide them.

The first apartment entered below the ground-floor was the armoury; and here, in one corner, Philip discovered arms and trappings that arrested his attention.

"By my life!" he cried, "here are the garbs of those mysterious robbers who have so long infested our mountain passes! How is this, sirrah?"

The Moslem guide shrank away and begged for mercy.

"'Tis true," he said, "you here behold the arms of the mountain robbers; but no true son of Islam ever bore them. The robbers were of your own blood—Christians who had joined our standard."

"Thank Heaven the riddle is solved!" said Philip.

"And," added another, "let us thank Heaven that the villains are in our power!"

From this place the guide led the way down into the deep, dark chambers which had been hewn from the native rock.

"Somewhere in this passage is the cell," said the Saracen.

"And shall we find the earl?" asked Philip.

The guide shrank and trembled.

"Speak! Shall we find the earl?"

"My masters," gasped the frightened wretch, "if you find him, I fear you will not find him living! Hold! harm not me. I have had no hand in it. The emir and Assad did the work."

"What work? Has the noble earl been slain?"

"No. The emir hoped to win him over to Islam, and he was left to starve!"

They pushed on, and finally came to a door which was bolted upon the outside. With trembling hands they undid the fastenings, and having thrown open the door, a man entered with a torch. There was a scrambling and a screaming, and an army of rats, leaping one upon the others, scampered away into the gaping fissures of the rock. Something lay upon the floor, ghastly and terrible!

Philip knelt down by the side of something that was little more than a skeleton—a skeleton partially covered by the clothing of the earl! The golden cross was upon the breast, and the diamond brooch was in the scarf that encircled the neck. A massive frame that had once been quickened with generous life; but now, alas, only a lifeless wreck.

A while they gazed in horrified silence; and then, tenderly and reverently, they lifted the mutilated form, and having wrapped it in their tunics, they bore it up into the hall, and called the bishop.

"No! no!" said Philip, when Hubert would have raised the pall. "Look not upon it. All semblance of him you have loved is gone."

The bishop moved back, murmuring a prayer.

"I had feared it," he said. "They gave him not one crumb of food, nor one drop of drink. But he is at rest!"

"And shall we bear this sad burden to the castle?" asked Philip.

"Yes. It were better. I will go with you."

Paul Nogent, with five-and-seventy men, was left to take care of the Black Tower—to enshroud the dead, and to nurse the wounded—while Philip and the bishop, accompanied by ten men, started for the castle. The good churchman's wounds had been washed and dressed, and he noticed them not. The fresh night air imparted new vigour to his frame, and he kept his saddle without difficulty.

The day was just breaking when the bishop and his companions rode into the court of Montrose Castle. Robert Douglas came out as they lifted their shrouded burden to the ground. Philip Vinay would have stayed his hand, but he could not. The young knight lifted the pall, and pulled away the swathing of tunics. He saw the cross of the earl, and the rich brooch, and the courtly trappings, all rent and frayed; and he asked, in a horrified whisper, what had caused this ravage.

Philip Vinay told to him the story; and when he had heard, Douglas sank upon his knees and wept.

"Heaven's will be done!" he said, as he arose to his feet.

And then he turned to the bishop, and asked how the dreadful intelligence should be conveyed to the countess and her child.

"I will do it," answered Hubert. "Be it mine to communicate this to the wife and daughter. They should not be wholly unprepared."

"They are not. But they must not see this sight."

"You are right, Sir Robert. Hide it from them."

And the bishop went in and saw the countess and her child, who had been aroused by the blast of the horn, and who were eager to know what had happened.

The aged prelate told the story as tenderly as he could; and then he knelt and prayed with the stricken ones.

CHAPTER XII.

Do not force me

To wed that man! I am afraid of him!

I do not love him! On my knees I beg thee

To do no violence, nor do in haste

What cannot be undone! *Spain's Student.*

THE season of mourning was often interrupted by startling rumours and signs, and the countess and her child found much to occupy their minds of present need, so that the burden of the past did not rest so heavily upon them as it might otherwise have done. Or, if it rested heavily, it was borne with more fortitude and spirit; and they had come to converse calmly and rationally upon the topics connected with the late disaster.

"The Emir Marouf has been breaking the truce longer than we thought," remarked Douglas, as they were engaged, one evening, in discussing the events of the times. "It seems that he has been harbouring the robbers who have given the inhabitants of our valley, and travellers through the same, so much trouble."

"And yet," suggested the countess, "the robbers were all Christians?"

"They were Franks," returned Douglas, "and once soldiers of the Cross."

"My husband long ago suspected this."

"Ah!"

"Yes. He was once attacked by the robbers, and two of them he and Bertram slew; and at that time he entertained the suspicion; but I know not that he ever gained absolute proof."

"I was not prepared for such a discovery," said Douglas; "and yet it did not surprise me. I had no doubt that the robbers were recreant Franks; but I dreamed not that they were sheltered so near us. However, there is no limit to the wickedness of treason. It is a poison flood that corrupts every avenue of its passage."

On the following morning, after their fast had been broken, Isabel and Margaret Ramsey were seated at a low table engaged in working a scarf for Douglas. The Lady Isabel was drawing a golden thread out and in, and for a guide she followed the lines which she had traced from a small pearl-handled dagger that lay before her. She was marking a dagger upon the scarf, and she had conceived the idea of encircling it within a laurel wreath. Thus were mistress and maid busily employed, when the door communicating with the corridor was opened, and one of the women from the steward's department entered.

"How now, Rachel?" Isabel spoke somewhat abruptly, for it was not the custom of the servants to intrude.

"I beg your pardon, lady; but I could not help it. Poor old Maud is dying."

"Dying!" cried Isabel, dropping her work.

"Maud dying?"

"Yes, my lady. A woman has just come up from her cot—a woman of Lystra, who has been nursing her."

"Did she bring a message from Maud?"

"Yes. She says Maud asks to see you before she dies."

"Go bring the woman hither. I would speak with her."

Isabel Montrose was greatly moved by this intelligence. Maud had been her nurse in the other years—had led her steps through infancy and early childhood—and was kindly remembered and well beloved. Of late years Maud had lived in a small cot at the foot of the slope on which the castle stood, where two of her sons cultivated a garden; and she had gone thither to be with them and care for their household.

Ere long Rachel returned, and with her came a woman whom Isabel had never before seen—a woman of middle-age, and habited after the manner of the peasants of Lebanon.

"How is this?" asked Isabel. "What is this word you bring from old Maud?"

"Maud is dying," replied the woman. She spoke frankly, and her face was fair, and not unpleasant.

"This morning, very early, she felt the hand of death upon her, and bade me seek the Lady Isabel. She said she could not die without seeing you. I have been nursing her many days, and she has often spoken of you, but never bade me call you until now."

"Is she alone?"

"She is alone while I am away."

"Where are her sons?"

"They are with the soldiers at the Black Tower. When Maud knew that the earl had been borne away, and that a force was being organised for an attack upon the traitors' stronghold, she bade her sons join in the holy work; and when they had gone she sent for me to come and stop with her. I have a son at the Tower."

"I will go,—I will go," said Isabel, her keen sympathies all aroused. "Return you to Maud, and tell her I will be with her very soon. Make haste, and cheer her up until I come."

The woman bowed and withdrew, and Isabel signified to her maid that she would prepare at once.

"But you will not go alone, my lady?"

"No, timorous child. Thou shalt go with me."

"But," pursued Margaret, hesitatingly, "I meant not that. Of course I should go. But will you not call Sir Robert?"

"Sir Robert has gone to Lystra with Bertram, to make arrangements for sheltering the people in the castle. He will call them all hither when the danger comes."

"You will let your mother know where you are going?"

"No. My mother is not well, and I will not disturb her. Go to Marge! Thou art as timid as a frightened doe."

"Not for myself, dear lady."

"Then fear not for me. Of what are you thinking? Maud's cot is within a fair bow-shot, and of danger there can be none. Would you have me neglect the woman who nursed me, and cared for me, through all my helpless years?"

"No, dear lady—far from my heart be such a thought. I would only have you cautious. I doubt if Sir Robert—"

"Hush, Marge. If Robert were here I would call him; or if Bertram were here, I might summon him; but they are gone, and there is none other whom I would call from the castle at this time."

The maid argued no further. She knew the impulsive nature of her mistress, and how wilful she could be when her sympathies moved her. As she passed the table her eye rested upon the pearl-handled dagger, and she caught it up and hid it in her bosom. Isabel saw the movement, but made no remark.

Having prepared themselves for the walk, the two girls filled a basket with such delicacies as a sick person might relish, and were soon ready to set forth. Isabel chose not to go out by the main court, as she cared not that the men-at-arms should see her; so she went to the postern; but as she realised that she ought not to leave the way open, she called Rachel, and bade her, to bolt the gate after she had gone out, and to watch for her return.

The way, beyond the postern, was over a narrow foot-bridge, which spanned a deep natural moat, and further on, they came to a path which wound around a high cliff towards the main pass. Half a mile distant, in a secluded vale, through which poured a mountain stream, stood the cot of the old nurse. It was in a delightful spot, and yet, when the light of the sun was withdrawn, it was very lonely and gloomy. In other times Isabel had thought it one of the most romantic places of the valley; but now the romance seemed swallowed up in isolation, and the old grandeur of the scenery had become wild and uninviting. The door of the cot was closed, but Isabel pushed it open, and entered, her maid following close behind her. The old "keeping-room" had lost its cheer, and seemed chill and deserted. There was no fire upon the hearth, and the blithesome, frolicking watch-dog came not to greet her. A shudder crept over the maiden's frame, and she began to wish that she had not come; or, at least, that she had listened to Margaret's advice.

Presently the woman who had visited her at the castle came out from the side room.

"Dear lady, I am glad you have come. Did you come through the dreary pass alone?"

"My maid came with me, as you see."

"And you have brought something in your basket for poor Maud?"

"Yes. Where is she?"

"She is in this little room. The light out here was painful to her eyes."

"She is living?"

"She breathes; and I think she has her senses. She called your name a moment since."

"Let me see her."

Margaret caught her mistress by the dress, and would have drawn her back; but she dared not speak the thoughts that burdened her mind; so she followed on into the narrow chamber. A bed was in one corner, and another door was partly open. But the bed had no occupant.

"Dear lady," whispered Margaret, "there's treachery here! Maud is not in the cot!"

Isabel started back, and would have retreated; but at that moment she was caught from behind, and an exultant voice sounded in her ear:

"Sweet lady, I thank thee for coming so readily."

It was the voice of Jasper St. Julien; and the burning eyes of Jasper St. Julien looked down into her face! With a quick, sharp cry, she tried to break away; but the grasp upon her arm was firm, and she could not break it.

Margaret's first impulse, when she heard the dreaded voice, and beheld the lowering face of the dark knight, was to snatch the dagger from her bosom and strike; but ere she had fully resolved upon the rash act, a second man had seized her and held her fast.

"Ah, my fair lady, you had not thought of this. You had not thought we should meet so soon."

"Sir Jasper," cried the maiden, flashing back an indignant look, "what means this outrage? Speak, sir! How dare you lay your hand upon me thus?"

"Lady, have you forgotten my promise?"

"I know of no promise that can warrant this. Unhand me! Where is Maud?"

"Maud is not here, pretty one. I took good care that she should be sent away before you came."

"Then she did not send for me?"

"No. It was I who sent; and I thank you for coming so readily."

The noble lady did not yet fully realise the entire meaning of her situation. She could not conceive how a Christian knight could dare to harm an earl's daughter.

"Jasper St. Julien, what mean you? What would you do with me? You will not detain me here against my will?"

"No, no, sweet lady, I will not detain you here at all. I shall take you to my own castle of Buchala."

"To thine own castle, base, false knight! Thou dar'st not!"

"Dare not, eh? By my sword! thou shalt see! This night thou shalt sleep beneath my roof, and tomorrow thou shalt be my bride. How likest thou the plan?"

At this point Margaret struggled fiercely, and cried aloud for help.

"Have a care, Gaspard!"

But the caution of the master was not needed, for of his own accord the man who held the maid had pressed a hand upon her mouth; and throwing her upon the floor, he was about to bind her arms, when she spoke:

"Spare me! Sir Jasper, I pray thee, let me be free! I will make no more noise. I promise it!"

St. Julien waved his hand, and Gaspard lifted the girl to her feet.

"Marge," said the knight, "I wish not to harm thee."

"And I," pleaded the poor girl, "wish only to serve my mistress. If I can serve her best by my silence, be sure I will hold my tongue."

"We shall see," and then, turning to Isabel, Sir Jasper added:

"The choice shall be yours to go as you will; but go you must. Do you understand me?"

Isabel looked up into the wicked man's face, and she understood him very well. She knew that such resistance as she and Margaret could offer could only make her lot harder and more severe.

"Shall I bind a gag upon your mouth?"

"No! no!"

"Then beware how you use your tongue!"

Upon this St. Julien blew a shrill whistle, and presently two other men entered, and without further words the girls were led forth to a thicket of lime-trees where six horses were standing.

"Pardon me," said the knight, as he held Isabel by the shoulders, while one of the others drew her arms behind her. "I must take this precaution. I dare not trust your hands within reach of the reins."

It was a season of agony most intense; but the lady was forced to submit. There was no help. Margaret was bound in the same way, and then they were lifted to the saddles which had been prepared for them, and so secured that they could not slip off.

St. Julien had calculated correctly. He had supposed, if Isabel came, that her maid would bear her company; and knowing that Douglas and Bertram had gone to Lystra, he did not think that she would call upon any of the men-at-arms. His intimate acquaintance with the relations existing between the lady and her old nurse had served him well in carrying his nefarious plot into execution.

"One remark only have I to make before we start," he said, speaking to both his captives. "Your own behaviour will decide whether you remain together or not. If you give me occasion, I will separate you, and keep you apart. Judge ye whether I will keep my word!"

Thus speaking, the knight vaulted to his saddle, and rode out from the dell, the prisoners following, carefully guarded.

The course lay for a time by a narrow path that wound amid rocks and trees—a narrow, devious pass, skirting the valley upon the east, and well hidden from view. At length they entered upon a broader road, south of the town, and the horses were put to a gallop. On, on, for many a weary mile—on, on, down the valley, and through the deep forest—on, on, until at length, when the sun had passed its meridian height, they drew up beneath the frowning battlements of the Castle of Buchala. It was not a castle like Montrose, but a stronghold, built upon the plain at the foot of Mount Hermon, without moat or drawbridge—a tower sheltered behind high, thick walls. The gate was opened upon the arrival of the cavalcade, and they rode into the court.

Isabel looked around, and beheld a motley crew. There were Christians and Saracens in equal proportion, all armed, and evidently on terms of perfect understanding and fellowship. And then she knew that Jasper St. Julien was in command of an Infidel host.

The girls were unbound, and lifted from their saddles, and conducted in the tower, or keep. The hall was dark and gloomy, and they saw armed men standing on every side. Up to a broad stairway—through a vaulted passage—to a corridor that looked over a narrow court and finally to a suite of three apartments, well furnished and comfortably fitted up.

The man who had conducted them hither pointed out to them the accommodations, and as he turned away, St. Julien entered.

"Shrink not from me, sweet lady," he said, as Isabel cowed and shrank away. "I would treat you well, and becoming your rank. I will be kind if you will let me."

"Kind Sir Jasper! Oh! what kindness can—"

"Hush, lady. Thou art not fit to speak now. Thou art blinded with passion. Take time for consideration. Meditate upon thy fate; for know it is sealed."

"Sir Jasper!"

"Thou art to be my wife! Hold! Speak not—I have sworn it, and so it shall be! Thou shalt return to Montrose in good season; and thou shalt be its mistress, too. Know that I am henceforth to be its earl. In one word, lady—not all the power of all the earth can avert me from my purpose—and my purpose is that thou shalt be my wife! Rest now, and prepare for the inevitable destiny that awaits thee."

With this St. Julien left the apartment and closed the door after him. Isabel stood where he had left her until his footsteps had died away in the distance, and then she sank down upon a couch and buried her face in her hands.

"Dear lady," said Margaret, "while there is life there is hope. Sir Robert, when he knows that you are gone, will know who hath borne you away, and Bertram will know, too."

Isabel looked up, and caught the inspiration that beamed in the eyes of her true-hearted friend.

"And," whispered the maid, "there is another who will watch over you—who hath more power than we wot of."

"Another, Mary?"

"Bertram told me this morning. The mysterious Knight of St. John is our friend, and hath an eye upon us."

"The Red Knight?"

"Yes. Bertram saw him last evening. As I live I think he will show you his hand; and we shall find it a hand strong to help."

With thoughts of the mystic Knight of St. John, Isabel's mind was attracted for a time from the terrors that had borne her down, and the warm tide of life once more gave colour to her cheeks.

(To be continued.)



[FOR EVER!]

STRANGELY MARRIED.

By ERNEST BRENT,

Author of "Strayed Away," "Milly Lee," "John Kendrake's Destiny," &c.

CHAPTER XXXI.

I am weary

Of the bewildering masquerade of life,
Where strangers walk as friends and friends as stran-
Where whispers overheard betray false hearts, (sore;
And through the mazes of the crowd we chase
Some form of loveliness, that smiles and beckons,
And cheats us with fair words only to leave us,
A mockery and a jest—maddened, confused,
Not knowing friend from foe. Long's loc.

THE fisherman had not far to go for medical at-
tendance in that little village on the beach. A poor
and clever practitioner had established himself in
the very midst of these toilers of the sea, and he
was generally at home. When not out visiting his
patients he was, as a rule, at work in the unpre-
tending surgery that formed the basement of his
unpretending house.

He returned to the cottage immediately with the
fisherman, from whom he enquired briefly the
nature of the accident. His first glance at Paul told
him that the case was hopeless.

"Is he related to you?" the doctor asked of
Falcon, who had watched him very gravely.
"No; but I have a strong interest in him. Be
kind enough to tell me exactly what there is to
fear."

"Are his friends near?"
"At Thorpendean. Will it be safe to take him
home?"

"Yes, if it is done with care. He may live twelve
hours, or even twenty, but he will never rally. He
has concussion of the brain."

The surgeon did what he could, but he could do
very little. It was simply a matter of time. Paul
Dalrymple's splendid constitution fought against
the approach of death to the last.

They procured a hackney carriage, with a steady
horse, who never could have remembered more than
one pace—a steady jog-trot, into which he had set-
tled by the advice of his driver, who was profitably
going up and down hill with four inside at the rate
of half-a-crown an hour. They improvised a bed
for Paul by means of short pieces of board laid
across the seats and covered with the cushions and
a mattress. He was placed upon it full length,
and with Falcon supporting his head, and the doctor
by his side, they set out for the Croft.

Mrs. Dalrymple was absent when they arrived.
Her anxiety to see Mr. Dacre and know what had

happened would not let her wait till the morrow.
She took the letter Paul had addressed to him, or-
dered her brougham, and was driven to the Lodge
at Thorpendean.

Mr. Dacre received her with a sort of sad reserve.
He recollected their last interview with something
akin to shame, when he reflected that he had nearly
been lured into a marriage with the doubtful wife
of his reprobate cousin.

"Paul gave me this letter for you," she said,
simply, "and he has gone away. There was
something very strange in his manner, Mr. Dacre;
I have been uneasy. Is anything wrong?"

Mr. Dacre opened the letter and read it through
before he replied. The contents gratified him. The
fugitive had begun the work of repentance in
earnest.

"No, madam," he said, "there is nothing wrong,
except that for his own safety your son must reside
abroad."

"Why?"

"Need I tell you?" he asked, looking at her
steadily, "Have you no suspicion of the truth?"

She drooped her stately head with a shudder, and
he saw that she understood him.

"My poor, unhappy boy!" she said. "You would
have been merciful to him had you known all."

"I have been merciful, madam, and I do know
all. I know that you are the lady whom my cousin
Godfrey wronged, and it is my intention to do now
what I would have done at first had I been aware
of your identity. Should your son succeed in es-
caping from England he must never return."

"I know it," she said, clasping her sorrowful
hands. "I know it."

"Will you follow him?"

"If it were to a desert. He is all I have left me,
and whatever may have been his faults—his crime,
he has always been tender and devoted to me."

"May it help him in the day of judgment!" said
the master of the Lodge, solemnly. "I have done
my best to save him from justice too."

"You have been very kind—he said so."

"He should have come to me sooner; but it is
useless now to dwell upon the past. When we hear
where he is you can go to him, and I will arrange
so that you shall receive a yearly income of five
hundred pounds, paid quarterly."

"It is more than we shall require."

"I had always intended to make you that allow-
ance, madam, as an act of right that Godfrey Dacre
left undone."

He was silent then, as if there were no more to
say.

"I heard you utter no reproach," she said, sub-

dued into humility by his kinness. "You do not
know how bitterly we have wronged you."

"I know everything."

"Of Lizzie—"

"Everything. Let it sink into oblivion now,
You, of course, will keep that secret."

"To my dying hour. But can we set her free?
I am sure Paul would wish it."

"She is free. I do not intend to let that shame-
ful knavery stand in the way of John Lenmore's
happiness, and I have sufficient influence to have
the marriage set aside with a single stroke of the
pen."

"I am glad to hear it; though Paul loved her
very dearly. You will send to me when you hear
from him."

"On the instant."

"Good-bye, Mr. Dacre. I have no words to say
what I feel, but I did not think we should part, and
for the last time. Believe me, your generous deli-
cacy has been sharper than the bitterest re-
proaches. We shall never meet again."

As he took her hand, and she stood before him
beautiful and sad, his passion began to rise, and
he regretted deeply that he could not ask her the
question he had so nearly asked her on the last oc-
casion. He sighed as he pressed her hand, and let
it go.

Just as he was going to ring for a servant to con-
duct her to the hall, he heard some one enter the
outer room, and the distinct voice of Falcon uttered
a few rapid words.

"Where is Mr. Dacre? I must see him. Not a
moment is to be lost!"

"Mrs. Dalrymple is with him, sir," said the
servant.

"Mrs. Dalrymple? poor lady. I don't know how I
shall have courage to tell her—yet it must be told."

Before Mr. Dacre could interrupt her, Mrs.
Dalrymple had opened the door, and her hand was
on Falcon's arm.

"What has happened?" she asked, "tell me, for
I am his mother; is he taken?"

"No, madam; do not be alarmed; he has fallen
from his horse."

"And not—killed—no, no; you would not have
come—he is not dead?"

"He is not dead, but his condition may be
critical; and he has asked for you."

He had no time to say more, the lady was gone,
and the brougham went homeward at a pace it
had never known before. Mrs. Dalrymple was
trying to realise what had taken place. Perhaps she
was only stunned—perhaps mentally injured. One
moment she pictured him with his head in agony—the

next he was still smiling as she had seen him smile in sleep. Then she tried to stamp out all thought, and prayed as only a mother can pray, that he might live and be restored to her. He was not taken, they would not punish him like a criminal—her sweetest comfort was in that.

"Mr. Dacre," said Falcon when the lady had departed. "I have a very solemn message for you."

"From—"

"From Dalrymple. He is on his death-bed, he will never see another sunset, and the doctor says, that within two hours paralysis of the brain may set in, his faculties are dim and dazed as it is, but he is singularly clear on one point."

"Well?"

"I thought he was insensible; I was sitting by his side, and he heard me speak a few kind words of him. He seemed glad, for he put his fingers on my hand, and said this:

"Tell Mr. Dacre that I should like to see her before I die. He will know who I mean. Tell him that it is my last wish. He will not refuse."

"He is past hope then?"

"Quite. Our man rode after him, and he stopped. Then I followed him, riding as a man can ride when the stakes are a thousand pounds, and only two horses are entered for the race. He thought I was pursuing him, and went down the cliff pathway; he was thrown very heavily. I should say he fell a clear seven yards."

"Poor fellow!"

"I heard the crash of his forehead on the stones, Mr. Dacre. When I picked him up I thought he was quite gone. He was a bold man, and a bad one; yet there was that about him that made me glad to think he would carry the day in spite of all."

"He had his father's courage and his father's vices, Mr. Falcon, and he was led into crime by a mistaken sense of wrong. He would bow down his head in the way of self-redemption had he been spared; we will speak gently of him."

"And will you let him see the lady?"

"Yes."

"I am glad of that," said Mr. Falcon, as though it were a personal favour. "If you had seen the wistful look of his great black eyes it would have touched you as it did me."

It was grand to see so much sympathetic feeling in a man who had to live by hunting down his kind.

Mr. Dacre went to the library, and in a few words related what had befallen Paul Dalrymple. He had sinned deeply, and there were more than one in the way of whose happiness his life was a direct barrier, yet the general feeling was one of regret for such a sad and sudden termination to his days.

"He wishes to see Lizzie," said Mr. Dacre, taking John Lenmore aside. "Shall it be so?"

John Lenmore inclined his head.

"I would not deny a dying man his last prayer, Mr. Dacre. Let Lizzie see him, if she will."

And Lizzie, when she heard under what circumstances the message had come, was willing to go. The man had left an impression upon her not easily to be effaced, and she knew that his strong strange love for her had been part of his incentive to crime. And she had feared him; now she could think of him with pity.

They saw when they arrived at the Croft, and were ushered into the snuffbox's chamber, that the end was very near. The pain had departed, and his senses were clear. The doctor had told them that it would be so before he died.

Mrs. Dalrymple sat by his side, quite tearless, but the dull, white agony on her face was worse to see than tears. She seemed glad when Lizzie entered, accompanied only by her guardian. Paul had been looking for her so wistfully.

He turned his large eyes upon her as she went round to the other side of his bed and took his hand.

"Lizzie, love," he whispered; "can you forgive me?"

"From my heart; and I am sorry to see you like this. You will be better soon."

"Yes," he smiled; "better soon; better when I am at rest. Do you, Lizzie, think that you could have learned to love me?"

"We will talk of that by-and-by," she said, gently, and permitting him to hold her hand to his breast. "Are you in pain?"

"Not now; I was, when I thought perhaps you would not come. Have you quite forgiven me?"

"Quite. I have, indeed."

His eyes began to dim, and the hand that held hers grew fainter.

"I think you have," he whispered; "for I can feel your tears. Will you kiss me?"

It was not the time to disturb his spirit by thinking of his guilt. The great change was already creeping over his features. She laid her hand tenderly on his forehead, kissed him, and

returned his kiss. As his eyes closed she lifted his head to his mother's breast, and he died there.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Let that foolish heart upbraid no more!
To conquer love, one ached but will to conquer.

Spanish Student.

The turf grew green over Paul Dalrymple's place of rest in Thorpendean old churchyard; the Croft was closed for one year; the lady whom Godfrey Dacre loved and wronged had lived in the repose of an Italian convent, for her life had nothing left, nothing but the hope of a hereafter, and the memory of him who had been spared to die repentant in her arms.

For nearly a year, Thorpendean had seen nothing of Mr. Carlow, that gentleman having taken a timely hint from the energetic Falcon, and made full restitution to Mr. Lenmore, previous to retiring to a London suburb, in a small compact villa and surroundings, realised in the city.

Banka went to grief, and companies were judiciously wound up, Mr. Carlow being inevitably connected with them in some way or other; when he was most plentiful, Mr. Carlow gathered much income; but, as he was a lawyer, nobody wondered.

He did not trouble May Lenmore by a second offer of his hand. John, with Mr. Falcon's assistance, made certain discoveries in London, which induced them to make him believe that it would be an act of wisdom on his part to return to Mr. Lenmore all such moneys as that gentleman had entrusted to him for investment in the Welsh Coal Company. He took this advice and his own departure.

For nearly a year, Frederick Amory, penitent, for his sister's sake, and deserving pardon, if real penitence could make him worthy of it, had been away, seeking restoration of health and peace of mind. He had a gentle companion, for May went with him. Some men can have no better guardian than a wife and he was one of them; he had a liberal though not too large income, and better than all, he had the affection of a single-hearted girl, who never could see, so that he had been to blame in anything.

John Lenmore was in London, carving his way to rapid distinction; he had far exceeded the limits of the income fixed by Mr. Dacre, and his own peerless, beautiful Lizzie, so strangely married to another, was now his wife. They lived in town, and Mr. Dacre had promised to take up his residence near them soon.

That promise was a source of pleasure to all, but one. Will Lenmore grumbled sorely when he heard of it.

"Everybody's going away," he said to John, when John and Lizzie spent a pleasant summer week at the old place. "You have gone, May's gone, and Mildred's going. I should like to know what I am to do?"

"Is there no pretty face attractive enough for you, Will? No one whom you could take home to be a daughter to the old people in May's place?"

"No! There's only one face in the whole world, John, and that belongs to somebody who thinks me a big, good-natured, lumbering countryman, who can be petted and smiled at and sung to, without thinking of anything else. Just as if I haven't a heart besides. I don't know how to tell what I feel in it."

"I see, Mildred?"

"Yes, it's Mildred," said Will, desperately. "I shall get away from Thorpendean when they go, I shall try America, or Africa."

"Or the Nile," suggested John, "or there's the Desert, sadly in need of farming. Or the Rock of Gibraltar, which is very sterile. Why, Will, where's your courage?"

"It's all very well for you to ask that, John, see what a difference there is between you and me."

"I tell you what, Will," said John, kindly, "you shall be my client, and I will plead for you."

"Will you, though?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"This evening. Plaintiff, William Lenmore; defendant, Mildred Dacre. Suit, to show cause why the defendant, having, by certain witcheries, obtained possession of the plaintiff's heart, should not give him her own in compensation for the same."

"It's all very well for you to make fun of me, John; you who have got the loveliest girl in Sussex, except one. I believe if she had been a princess you would have won her somehow."

"Then we will see what I can do for you."

And he kept his promise. That very evening he made an opportunity of seeing Mildred, and speaking to her on the subject with serious playfulness. The tranquil beauty of Miss Dacre's face did not leave it an easy matter to see how much she had suffered by giving up her old dream of Fred.

But she had resigned him without pain at the last. He was not what her ideal had been, though she could and would have loved him had he ever asked her. It would have been to her a kind of duty to strengthen his character and make him a better man, at the same time that her strong sense told her it was better when a man required no such duty done.

"Will you be glad to leave the old place?" John asked. "It is changed now from the old times, Mildred?"

"Not glad and not sorry I think, John. But father is dull here, and I think he is going to live in London as much to be near you as Lizzie."

"Yes. Ours is a pleasant intercourse. The ripeness of his judgment and his genial nature are a help to me. There is no man whom I value so highly."

"Life must be very sweet to you," she said, after a pause.

"Very. I am like one who has climbed a hill, and reached a level road on which my feet fall without trouble. I never imagined that anything could be so beautiful on this earth as the deep and holy sense of joy that fills me when my work is done and I am going home."

"And that is because Lizzie loves you?"

"Because we love each other, and our lives blend clear every day. Because the weary waiting is over and she belongs to me, and in the tenderness of wifehood she has no thought that is not mine too."

"And memory brings no shadow?"

"None. The past, that part of it which was sad, is a sealed letter. I love my wife above all earthly things, and would not speak a thought which might give her a moment's pain. The past has no shadow. Lizzie fills my soul with an unchanging, tranquil sense of happiness."

"I wonder if it is so with all men," said Mildred, with a sympathetic sigh.

"When they love truly, yes."

"How strange it is that some are born to go uncared for."

"I do not think that anyone is born to go uncared for. We cannot always make our own claim and have it; but others may care for us."

"What if we do not care for them?"

"See if they are worth loving, and find such pleasure as there may be in making them happy. You would not call it wise to waste a life because we failed to win the one we wanted."

"Life never can be wasted if it is devoted to an earnest purpose," she assented; "but it would be very dreary."

He touched the hand that rested on his arm.

"Do not say so. Having no purpose, would you leave Thorpendean if you knew that your going would give pain to one affectionate, faithful heart?"

"Tell me what you mean, John."

"Is the old dream gone?"

"Quite."

"Then let me speak for one whose dream still lingers, who sets so high a value on your love that he is afraid to tell you of his own, lest in telling you he might lose your friendship. Not a brilliant man; not learned; not one with whom you would at the outset find companionship; but one who would be a loving and a grateful scholar; a sterling, honest fellow whose heart is full of you."

"I have thought of it," she said, simply. "You speak of Will?"

"Yes."

"Does he wish it very much?"

"As earnestly as I longed for the hour when I could call Lizzie mine at the altar."

"He is a brave, true-hearted country gentleman, and I like him very much," she said, thoughtfully, "but I have not prepared myself to think of him in that light. I could not look into his face and tell him truthfully that I love him yet."

"But for his sake you might tell him you would try."

"Do you wish it?"

"Very much, Mildred. I could trust you with him safely. I should know that you would never be treated with neglect or unkindness. His love for you is a reverential tenderness that will remain so to the end."

"You have been my brother ever since we were children, John," she said, putting up her lips quietly to meet his, "and I know that what you advise is best and wisest."

"Heaven bless you, Mildred dear. I cannot give you the man of your choice, but I can give you a faithful guardian, and when the old dream is worn out happiness will come."

He led her in and found Will with Lizzie, who had more than an inkling of John's purpose in taking Mildred out. When Will saw his brother's face, the look of wistful hope on his own repaid him.

"I had a message from Will," said John, "and I think, Lizzie, we had better leave them while Mildred gives him the answer. They will find us in the drawing-room, I daresay."

Left alone with Mildred, the stalwart young yeoman rose with the shyness of a child; he held out both hands with a gesture far more impressive than words.

She took them, gravely and sweetly, and the kind expression of her clear eyes gave him courage.

"Did John tell you?" he asked. "Did he, Mildred? I was afraid to."

"Yes, Will, he told me everything."

"How miserable I should be when you left Thorpendean, and that I wanted you to love me?"

"Yes."

"And what did you tell him?" he said, with his heart in his voice. "Not that—"

"I told him that I would try to love you, Will. That if it would make you very happy I would be your wife. There, you great, silly fellow, don't give way."

For the great flood of joy had welled up from his soul to his eyes, and his throat was husky as he took her tenderly in his mighty arms.

"Heaven bless you, Mildred!" he said. "I think if you had gone from the old place and left me behind my heart would have broken."

"And that," she said, with her sweet face placed of her own accord on his shoulder, "only shows what a big, simple, loving heart it is. We had better go upstairs now, Will, and tell father what we have done."

They went hand in hand, passing on the threshold to exchange their first caress—the kiss that set the seal on William Lenmore's future and left him nothing to desire.

In the years that have gone by since the Thorpendean bells rang at Mildred Deere's wedding with William Lenmore, the convent in Italy and the grave in the churchyard have faded into faint and distant memories. Frederick Amory and May are back at the old place, and the evil of his days is forgotten.

Mildred is at Glen Farm, content when her husband is happiest. Mr. Deere is sometimes in London, and nearly always with John Lenmore. Lissie is proud of him because he has won his place and is in the House as member for Thorpendean, and loving him just the same because he is the same John Lenmore to her. These, meeting in love, and peace, and goodwill with each other and the world, we leave here.

THE END.

MYSTERY OF THE BLACK DIAMOND.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MEANWHILE, Captain Evelyn remained in London, in spite of the urgent entreaties of his uncle and his wife that he should come to them, and in spite of their glowing reports of Lady Violet's increased loveliness and loveableness.

"Why should I go to the Nest?" he said to himself. "Lady Violet must detest me or she would have answered my letter; and I don't care about going where I may meet any day a woman whom I cannot help loving more the more I see of her, but who so evidently hates me."

However, he went down at Christmas, which Lord Evelyn persisted in keeping in true old baronial fashion with mistletoe and holly, and feasting for all his retainers. The tenantry on his estate always held high carnival on this day, and came in crowds to be entertained in the immense overgrown-wreathed banquetting hall.

Lady Evelyn took it upon herself to scold the presence of the young Countess of Eaglescliffe, who, although she would not go into general society for a long time yet, could have no excuse for refusing to join a mere family party like this.

Lady Violet hesitated; then with her usual straightforwardness, asked:

"Captain Evelyn is to be with you?"

A faint colour rose in her lovely cheek as she put the question, but she did not avoid the other's somewhat disconcerted glance.

"My nephew is to be with us certainly," acknowledged Lady Evelyn with reluctance. "You do not mind him," she added innocently.

Lady Violet was debating the question with herself with slightly flushed cheeks.

"If I had heard anything definite from those lawyers," she thought, "I should like it. As it is, I had better not."

"My nieces are coming, I suppose I ought to tell you," remarked Lady Evelyn. "The eldest was presented at the last drawing-room, and created quite a sensation, I assure you. The other is a mere child yet. But Roy is fond of them both. It is about the only place he visits in London now. I am having them more on his account than my own."

A sharp pang, whose meaning she did not stop to analyse, smote Lady Violet's heart. The leaven of the old waywardness was in her still.

She extended a little hand frankly to Lady Evelyn. "You are very kind to ask me to a family party like that," she said, "and to show you how I appreciate the kindness, I'll come, though I didn't mean to do so when you began."

The invitation included Miss Miggs also, and Lady Violet answered for her, well aware that her wish would be law to the little governess.

Mousie uttered an verbal remonstrance at the proposed sojourn at the Nest. She merely asked quietly if Captain Evelyn was to be there, and Lady Violet with slight defiance in her tone answered "yes."

Then she added something in the style of a naughty child finding an excuse for itself:

"I should judge from what Lady Evelyn said that her nephew had quite fallen in love with one of her nieces, a charming girl, she says she is; I am anxious to meet her."

Miggs made no remark, but as she stood near Lady Violet, shyly kissed her on the forehead.

Lady Violet made an impatient movement.

"I know what you mean, Mousie," she said. "You think I ought not to go. I don't see where the harm is; I'm tired of moping here, and I want to see this new beauty wonderfully. Come, now speak up, you absurd little woman, and tell me shall I go or stay?"

"My dear," said Mousie, tenderly, "I have noticed that when you really follow your own judgment, it never leads you astray."

"Which means that I'm not following my judgment now," said Lady Violet, between a laugh and a frown. "I'm not, for that matter, and I won't. I've promised to go, and I can't take it back now."

"Shall you take anything but black dresses?" asked Miggs, meekly, by way of changing the conversation.

"Certainly not."

"You might for mourning, you know."

"I don't choose," spoke Lady Violet, imperatively. "Why can't you let me alone, Miggs? Don't you see I'm cross?"

The twenty-second day of December came a letter from the London lawyers for Lady Violet. After some unimportant preliminaries the letter concluded:

"We have been so fortunate as to stumble upon the clerk who assisted at your marriage, and through him have found and examined those church records from which we hoped so much. Unhappily the leaf which concerns you is missing, without doubt abstracted by Conway or at his instance. The clergyman who married you is dead. Sir Jasper Towleley is probably living. At the last heard from him, his yacht was cruising among the West India Islands."

"As your suspicions tended in his direction, we have given great care to the investigation of his whereabouts and habits six years ago. There is nothing as yet to contradict the supposition that he may be the individual of whom we are in search. We have ascertained that the masked gentleman who was married the twelfth day of April, six years ago, was tall and wore a very long black beard. Sir Jasper Towleley is tall, and wore a black beard at that time. The masked bridegroom was heard to utter the name of Beatrix Duvdevant. Sir Jasper was intimate with Miss Duvdevant, and if you could consent to taking that lady into our confidence, it is quite possible, she might render us material assistance. Finally and most conclusively, Sir Jasper Towleley did have a black diamond which he caused to be set in a jet ring. Sir Jasper's ring, wherever it is, has concealed beneath the stone his coat of arms—an inverted shield, with the motto of his house, 'Semper paratus.'"

Lady Violet's fingers trembled as she drew forth her wedding ring and carefully examined it. But if anything was hidden beneath the glister of the strange stone she failed to discover it, and Miss Miggs was no more successful, when having read the lawyer's letter, she in her turn took the curious jewel in her hands.

"She knows you are to be here, but we are none of us looking for you till to-morrow," Lady Evelyn said to her husband's nephew, as she met him unexpectedly in the hall the evening of the twenty-third.

He had come up in a fly from the station.

Lady Evelyn hurried him into her boudoir.

"Lady Violet is in the library by herself," she said eagerly, her kind face beaming with the enthusiasm of the moment. "If I were you, Roy, I should go in, as if I did not know she was there."

Captain Evelyn shook his head.

"That would not be fair."

"Everything is fair in love."

He smiled.

"Beside, I am not in a state to intrude upon a lady. I must hurry and dress for dinner."

"She only came this morning; and she has already asked me a curious question about you. She wanted

to know where you were the year I married your uncle. You know where you were, Roy."

Roy Evelyn turned sharply towards her, his face paling.

Lady Evelyn hesitated.

"I told her you were in Devonshire, with your corps; and so you were a part of the time."

"Could Beatrix Duvdevant have told her anything?"

"I imagine so. I could not guess from her face, for she kept it the other way, but I knew by her voice that she had some more than common interest in the question. She loves you, Gilderoy, try as she may to conceal it."

As Captain Evelyn sought his dressing-room, his brow was clouded, his mind perplexed, as it was ever when he thought of Lady Violet. His ingenious soldierly nature shrank from even that slight evasion of Lady Evelyn's.

"If Lady Violet has heard anything from Beatrix it is worse than useless to attempt to conceal the truth," he said to himself. "Beside, if I knew it would lower me in her eyes, I had rather she were told the truth than a falsehood, or anything that looked like one."

Hysler had already unpacked and laid out everything necessary for a speedy toilette, and assisted his master with nimble fingers.

The impulsive guardsman was indeed impatient. His heart bounded as he left his rooms, hoping for a glimpse of Lady Violet before dinner.

He stopped at Lady Evelyn's door. It was ajar, and after a slight knock, he entered.

No one was there, or he thought so, and walked straight into the trap his aunt had set for him.

Lady Violet stood at the farther side of the room, looking at some photographs. Her back was to him, but there was a mirror between the windows, and in that he could see the proud, sweet face. He would have known the slight, elastic shape anywhere.

She was dressed as usual now in black, and even yet she wore no ornaments; but the robes of an empress would not have made her fairer in Roy Evelyn's eyes.

Suddenly, as though magnetically drawn in that direction, her clear, dark eyes lifted and met his in the glass.

If she had seen a ghost, she could not have started more violently, or turned whiter.

Captain Evelyn came forward at once, begging her pardon for startling her, but if his life had depended on it he could not have made his voice entirely steady.

"I did not know you had come; and I am nervous lately, too," she explained.

"May I stay and talk to you till dinner," he asked, with such eagerness as called the fugitive colour swiftly to her white cheeks.

For answer she gave him her hand, and as he led her to a seat she said to herself:

"It is only for ten minutes at most, and I have not seen him for so long."

Her heart was throbbing fast; her eyes, in spite of her, shone liquid with joy at seeing him.

He must have been blind indeed if he had not read aright the eloquence of that beautiful face.

"I was almost afraid to meet you," he said, in a low voice.

Her eyes drooped before his. She felt that it was madness to linger there, but it was such sweet madness that she could not tear herself away.

"Afraid? That was not like you," she said.

"Then I had no need?" he questioned.

She looked at him inquiringly.

"You are not displeased with me then in any way?" he said.

"How could I be?"

"You never answered my letter. Besides, I imagined, I was afraid—"

"Well, what did you imagine?" she asked, anxious to get away from the subject of the letter.

"It was very foolish, but I imagined you might have been prejudiced against me by—"

"No one could prejudice me against you."

"That moment came the summons to dinner."

"It was nothing Beatrix told her then that made her put that question to my aunt," Captain Evelyn said to himself, as he gave the young countess his arm.

"He loves me as much as he ever did in spite of Lady Evelyn's handsome niece," thought Lady Violet. "If I had not been the most selfish and ungenerous of creatures, I should have stayed away from the Nest."

Bell Warleigh and her sister came in the course of the following day.

Bell was the beauty, handsome, laughing eyed, charming. Lady Evelyn took sole possession of her at the earliest opportunity.

"I insisted upon your coming for one special reason," she said, bluntly. "You are to make Lady

Violet jealous: It's the one vulnerable point about these high-strung women."

Bell Warleigh opened her saucy, bright eyes to their widest, but after a little explanation fell in with her aunt's plans completely.

Captain Evelyn frowned visibly when he found himself, do what he would, inevitably paired off with Bell Warleigh, and Lady Violet's beautiful face grew in hauteur and cold disdain.

Simply genuine and transparent herself, incapable of feigning an interest in any one which she did not feel, she was wounded deeply in both her pride and her heart by Evelyn's seeming defection.

"I know, of course," my lady said to herself, "that we could never be lovers, but I thought we might be friends; and it was such happiness to think there was one man in this world who deserved a woman's love. But I will occupy no second place in his heart either as friend or lover."

So when Captain Evelyn, after several unsuccessful efforts, at last extracted himself from his tormentors and sought her side, her brilliant glance was cold, her manner constrained and formal, and she even reminded him, after a time, that Miss Warleigh had no companion, and must miss him.

Hasty of judgment, and impulsive of action, Captain Evelyn exclaimed rapturously:

"Ah, Violet, you are jealous of Bell Warleigh. I thank her for showing me your heart."

My lady flushed angrily, then regarding him with a look of icy disdain, rose, and with a little bend of her superb head, said:

"I beg you will excuse me, Captain Evelyn, the conversation is really getting beyond my depth."

She swept from him to an opposite window in which stood Lord Evelyn. The earl looked up brightly at her approach. He liked the queenly girl exceedingly, and for her own sake quite as much as for her father's. But his wife spoke to him at that moment, and as, excusing himself to answer her, he turned away, Captain Evelyn took his place, and laid a gentle but detaining hand upon her arm.

"Have I offended beyond forgiveness, Lady Violet?" he said, in accents of profound regret and anxiety.

My lady did not even look at him, as she said, coldly:

"I hope, sir, I am not so narrow-minded as to take offence at any expression of honest opinion."

"I am very sorry—"

"Pray do not be. For what?"

"That I should have made so rash and impertinent an assertion. It was one of my foolish impulses the speaking so, and arose solely from that desire which will never leave me, the desire of winning you to love me."

"And by way of testing the state of my affections you flirt with Miss Warleigh," flashed my lady.

"Thank you. If I know myself, I am incapable either of affection or esteem for a man who flirts."

So saying she called Lucy Warleigh, the younger sister, to her, and thus closed the discussion.

Captain Evelyn regarded her with a sorrowful, half-reproachful look.

"Indeed you misjudge me," he began, and said no more.

"We have a guest," said Lady Evelyn, coming up to them; "a friend of the earl's and of yours, Cildero."

"Ah!" Captain Evelyn spoke, with a show of interest, but his thoughts were with the sweet, proud girl, who stood beside him, bandying light, laughing words with Lucy Warleigh.

My lady's bright gaiety only masked an aching heart.

"You don't ask me who has come," said Lady Evelyn.

And at this moment Miss Miggs glided forward and laid a light little arm about Lady Violet's waist. The governess was pale to her lips.

"Could you come with me a second?" she said, hurriedly, to her.

"Certainly," my lady said, glad of an escape.

"How singular the attachment between those two? remarked Lady Evelyn, looking after the pair. "Sir Jasper Townley is here, Roy."

(To be continued.)

SHIPPING EMPLOYED IN OUR FOREIGN TRADE.—The number of vessels entered inwards with cargoes (including their repeated voyages) at ports of the United Kingdom in the first half of the year 1870 was 12,057 British and British colonial vessels of 4,553,102 tons, and 8,208 foreign of 2,009,957 tons, making together 20,265 vessels of 6,563,059 tons. As compared with the corresponding half of 1869 there is an increase of 172,385 tons of British and 125,315 tons foreign tonnage. If we turn to the rest of war we find that the French vessels entered inwards at our ports in the first half of 1870 were

1,071, of 122,531 tons; the Prussian, 754, of 175,931 tons; Hanse Towns, 270, of 191,514 tons; Mecklenburg and Oldenburg, 173, of 42,287 tons; Hanoverian, 86, of 7,152 tons; Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg, 173, of 42,267 tons. The clearances outwards in the first half of 1870 comprised 16,319 British and British colonial vessels of 5,302,526 tons, and 10,023 foreign of 2,392,064 tons, an increase over the corresponding half of the preceding year of 386,343 in the British tonnage, and 403,968 in the foreign tonnage. 7,119 vessels of 1,302,143 tons departed for France; 1,381 of 321,468 tons for Prussia; 1,435 of 506,475 tons for the Hanse Towns; 274 of 28,984 tons for Hanover; 412 of 52,430 tons for Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg. Of the whole clearances outwards, 2,754 vessels of 1,455,922 tons departed for British possessions, and 23,588 of 6,738,668 tons for foreign countries.

LEIGHTON HALL.

CHAPTER XXX.

Something says in my heart that near me Gabriel wanders;

Is it a foolish dream, an idle and vague superstition? Or has an angel passed, and revealed the truth to my spirit? *Evangelist.*

GEORGE'S face was white with apprehension and terror when John ceased speaking; and her voice was husky and thick as she replied:

"That cannot be. I saw him placed in the earth. I know just where he lies."

"I was not thinking of him, but of the other one; of Henry. You don't know where his grave is."

"No, no; but John, there can be no doubt. You made so sure yourself. You told me he was dead. Oh, was it all a farce? Oh, John, do you know anything—"

She was kneeling to him now, with her proud head bent to his very feet, just as once she had crouched years ago when he was but a boy, as it were, and she a wretched woman suing for pity, and begging him to stand by her in her need. Then her long glossy curls had swept the floor just as they swept it now, and John had lifted her up, and comforted her, and sworn to be her friend, and he wanted to do it again, though his heart was harder towards her now than it had been then. He could more readily forgive the sin committed through great temptation when she was young and without a counsellor, than he could forgive the many years during which she had lived a falsehood. Still he pitied her much, and loved her much, for she was his sister, and her great beauty had always exercised a wonderful power over him. He felt it even now as she lifted her white, tear-stained face to his, and as he had done that other time in the darkest hour she had ever met, so he did now; he stooped and raised her up, and tried to comfort her, and said that he "knew nothing and had heard nothing, only such things sometimes did happen, and it would be very awkward for her, as Roy's wife, to be some day confronted by Henry Marton."

"Don't, don't speak his name!" she almost shrieked, while a shudder like a convulsion shook her frame. "I have been greatly to blame, but my punishment has been terrible. I have suffered untold agony in thinking of the past. I surely have atoned, and now if there is a heaven of rest for me, don't try to keep me from it by harrowing up my fears. I know he is dead, I am sure of it; and I mean to be a good wife to Roy. He never shall repent his choice—never. I'll bring every thought and feeling into conformity with his, see if I don't; and, John, you must help me to be good; must stand by me as a brother. Will you, John? As Roy's wife, with something of my own, I can help you so much, and I will. Annie shall no longer be an expense to you. I will support her entirely."

"And not let Roy know you are doing it?" John answered, and George replied:

"I will tell him that, at least. I will not cheat him there. I'll arrange it before we are married, that I am to do something for Annie, and perhaps when he sees how I care for her, he will propose that she should live with us. Oh, if he only would!"

John felt that on this point, at least, George was sincere. She did love the little Annie, and his heart softened still more towards her; and when, as she was about to leave him, she said, imploringly, "Kiss me, John, once, as you used to do!" he put his arm around her, and kissed her white lips, which quivered with emotion, while the tears fell like rain upon her cheeks.

"You are a good brother, and I will try to be good, too, for your sake and Roy's," she said, as she bade him good-night, and left the room.

He had not congratulated her, but she knew he would keep silent; knew, too, that she had comparatively nothing to fear from Maude, and but for one harrowing fear, which yet was not exactly a

fear, she would have felt tolerably composed and happy, as she sought her own chamber.

John's words, "What if the dead should come back to witness against you?" rang in her ears, and when, as she stood by the window, looking out into the moonlight, a shadow flitted across the grass, she trembled from head to foot, and turned faint with nervous dread. But it was only the watch-dog, Bruno, and as he bounded out into the light she grew quiet, and even smiled at her own weakness.

"That cannot be," she said; and then, as if to make assurance doubly sure, she opened a trunk which always stood in her closet and, taking from it a box, touched a secret spring, and soon held in her hand three documents—one, a newspaper, soiled and yellow with time, and containing a paragraph which said that a certain Henry Marton, who had managed to escape from justice, had recently died in a little out-of-the-way village, and that his friends, if he had any, could learn the particulars of his death by inquiring at the place where he died. The other two were letters, one from the dying man himself, who wrote that, from the very nature of his disease, he had but a day or two to live; and one from John, who had learned that it was really true that Henry Marton had died there at such a time, and then had written the same to his anxious sister at home. She had kept these papers carefully, and guarded them from every eye but her own, and occasionally she read them over to assure herself of the truth. But now she would keep them no longer, lest in some way they should come to light; and so, holding them to the gas and then throwing them upon the hearth, she watched them as they crisped and blackened, and turned to a pile of ashes.

There was nothing now in her way, and, as was her constant habit, the woman who had sinned so greatly, but who was going to do better, knelt down and said her prayers, and thanked Heaven for Roy, and asked, first, that he might never know what she had been; and, second, that she might be to him all that a good, true wife should be, and that he might be willing for Annie to live with her. This done, she felt a great deal better; felt as if she really were a very good woman, and that but for John, who had such straight-laced notions, she would be confirmed, by way of helping her to keep her resolution!

Roy's first thought on waking the next morning, was to wonder what had happened that he should feel so oppressed, as if a load were bearing him down. Then it came to him that he was engaged, and he wondered why that should affect his spirits, as it certainly did.

All the excitement of the previous night was gone, and he could reason clearly now, and remember how queerly George had talked and acted at first, just as if she had done some horrible deed, which, if she should confess it, would prove a barrier between them. But she had not confessed, and she had recovered her usual composure, had accepted him, and was going to be his wife sometime, he hardly knew when, though he had a vague idea that there need be no undue haste. He had done his duty in asking her, and surely Mr. Burton would not urge an immediate marriage, neither would George desire it, girls never did; and having fixed the blissful day at some period far in the future, Roy gave a relieved yawn and went on with his toilette, quickening his movements a little when he saw from his window the flutter of a white dress, and knew that Miss Overton was already in the grounds.

"She is an early riser, and it must be that which makes her look so fresh, and bright, and young, though of course she is very young. I wonder, by the way, how old George is. I never heard anyone hazard a conjecture. Sometimes she looks quite twenty-eight, though that can't be, as she has only been out of school four or five years; and even if she is, I am thirty myself, and two years difference is enough, provided the husband has the advantage. George will never look old with those eyes and that hair."

Roy was dressed by this time, having made a more careful toilette than usual with a view to the call he was to make on his fiancée after breakfast he would have said, if questioned, but really with a view to joining Miss Overton in her morning walk.

He found her in a little arbour, looking pale and tired, as if she had not slept, but she smiled brightly as he came up, and made some remark about the pleasant morning. He wanted her to talk of George—wanted to be reassured that he had done well for himself; but as nothing had been said to her on the subject, she did not feel at liberty to introduce it, and so the conversation drifted as far as possible from Miss Burton and reached at last to "Edna, my sister," whom Roy hoped eventually to have at Leighton.

"She will come, of course, when I am married," he said. "She can then have no excuse for not coming."

"Perhaps your wife would not like her," Edna suggested, and Roy replied:

"I am sure she will. Georgie is not hard to please, and from Edna's letters I judge her to be a very bright, sprightly little body. There's a good deal of mischief about her. I saw her once in the train, with some of her schoolmates. I had been very ill and was still an invalid, nervous and irritable, and afraid of the least breath of air. Girl-like, they opened all the windows near them, and mother got a cinder in her eye, and I began to sneeze, and at last asked the sauciest looking one to shut the window, not pleasantly, you know, but savagely, as if I were the only person to be considered in the carriage. She did shut it with a bang, and then avenged herself by making a caricature of me shivering in a poke-bonnet and called me a Miss Betty."

"How did you know that?" Edna asked, looking up with so much surprise as almost to betray herself.

She had not thought of that sketch since the day when it was made, and she was curious to hear how Roy came to know about it.

"She dropped it as she left the carriage, either purposely or accidentally, and mother picked it up," Roy said. "I have it still, and if ever I see her and come to know her well, I mean to show it to her, and have some fun with it," he continued, while Edna asked, a little uneasily:

"Then you were not angry with her for her impertinence?"

"Yes, I was at the time, very angry, and wanted to box her ears; but that only lasted a little time, and I was glad to see myself as others saw me. I do believe it did me good. She must be something of an artist, for even as a caricature the picture was a good one. I wish I knew where she was. I must write to-day, and tell her of my engagement."

He was trying to introduce that subject again, but Edna made no reply. His mention of the picture had sent her off on an entirely different train of thought, and she was glad that just then the breakfast bell rang, and brought their walk to an end.

Roy spent the most of the day at Oakwood, but he was home to dinner, and passed the evening there, and Edna heard him talking with his mother about his engagement, and asking if she were glad.

"Yes, very glad," was the reply; "though it does not matter quite so much now as it did before Miss Overton came. I am getting really attached to her, she seems so pleasant and refined, and knows what I want before I tell her. She is a very superior person, I think, and must have been well brought up."

Edna thought of the house by the graveyard, and of Aunt Letty, and wondered what the fastidious Mrs. Churchill would say, could she know just where and by whom she had been brought up. Mrs. Churchill did nothing by halves; she liked or disliked thoroughly, and, as she had conceived a great liking for her little companion, she was more inclined to talk of her than of Georgie, though she did ask when the marriage was to be consummated.

"Whenever it suits Georgie," Roy replied. "For myself, I am in no haste, and should prefer waiting until next spring. We are very comfortable now, and Miss Overton's presence precludes the necessity of having some one for company."

He did not seem to be a very ardent lover, impatient for the happy day; and, indeed, he was not, and much of his indifference was owing to Miss Overton, who experienced a feeling of relief in knowing that Roy would probably not bring his wife home until spring. She could not live with Georgie; she had decided that point at once, and that lady's arrival as mistress would be the signal for her departure. So she hailed with delight anything which would put off the evil day; for, short as had been her stay at Leighton, she was very happy there, and would have found it hard to leave it, with all its refinement, and luxury, and ease, to say nothing of Roy, and go back to her old life again as teacher of a promiscuous crowd of children. She did not mean to be a listener to any private conversation between Roy and his mother, but, situated just as she was, seated directly under the window where they were sitting, she could not well help herself, and so she sat still, while their talk turned next upon herself, as Edna, whom Roy meant to have at Leighton as soon as Georgie came.

"I've never felt right about it at all," he said. "Poor little thing, knocking about the world alone, trying to pay a debt she foolishly thinks she owes me; and I am determined to find her by some means. Wouldn't you like to have her here when Georgie comes?"

Mrs. Churchill hesitated a little, and then replied:

"Wouldn't three ladies be in each other's way? for, Roy, I don't know how she will behave; but I should not like to have Miss Overton leave even when Georgie comes."

"Nor I, nor I," Roy said, quickly, decidedly, with a feeling that he should greatly miss the little girl,

who could hear no more lest her feelings should betray themselves, and who stealthily crept away from the window and sought her own room, where she was free to indulge in a hearty fit of tears.

(To be continued.)

THE VEILED LADY.

BY THE

Author of "Fairleigh," "The Rival Sisters," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LIX.

NATURE seemed to hold an opinion in direct opposition to that of the youth, which was referred to at the close of the previous chapter, for he was soon enjoying slumber. It did not last long, however, for ere an hour had passed he was fully awake, and gazing towards the window through which the rays of the queen of night shone in silvery radiance.

Moments passed, but sleep came not with soft touch to woo his eyelids. A strange wakefulness possessed him. Gradually his mind reverted to Inez, and throwing his arms across the pillow, he mused:

"Again the ever-changing panorama of my life moves on, and now my future is to be in love, and early too, yet I don't think I experience any of that transport, or in other words, passionate nonsense, that Mrs. Linwood referred to. I am charmed, but I am not infatuated. And, by-the-by, that recalls to my mind the words of dear, lost Dombey, and though ridiculous, as most of his expressions were, still they were the honest sentiments of as true a heart as ever beat in the breast of man. But let not gloomy retrospection sadden me now. Inez! I love the name, I love the fair being who bears it. And yet as I reflect upon it, it seems strange that I, whose life has been one battle against fearful odds, should love. I can hardly realise it at times, and then as I think how patient and gentle she was when I was ill and irritable, how devoted and self-sacrificing,—then it appears to me a beautiful reality, and I know that I am blessed with the love of one who has all the fortitude, sense, and affection of a woman blended with the docility and reliance of a child."

He paused and raised his eyes. He started back; his face paled; his luminous orbs distended; his lips parted; his breath came more quickly; and as if entranced, he gazed in doubt and amazement towards the window.

Slowly rising, as if from a circle of air, was that fair face with its folds of darkness around it drooping. Gradually that perfect form arose until it stood erect and motionless in all its silent grandeur, in all its weird and wonderful beauty, in all its charming yet awful sublimity.

The youth moved not, but seemed enraptured, while his eyes emitted sparkles of rosy light, and his chest rose and fell under the awe and admiration which effervesced within.

With a gliding motion, as if sailing upon the lightest of heaven's zephyrs, that matchless being of rare and noble presence entered the chamber, and stood like a shadowy statue, where the moonbeams played.

The youth tried to speak, but his voice died away in a husky whisper; he raised himself upon his elbow, and gazed upon her in dumb amaze. He was not frightened, that sensation was a stranger to him, but he was permeated with awe—a veneration that held him powerless, and thrilled his being.

An instant more and the Veiled Lady approached the couch, while finer and more distinct became that peerless figure, and increased in its awful, yet glorious majesty, and blacker still grew those filmy robes of darkling night.

The youth closed his eyes. He feared that the excitement would be detrimental to his health, though he could not resist the temptation to raise his eyelids at intervals and look upon that weird, fascinating being whose queenly presence and exquisite elegance of mould enthralled his senses.

A moment passed, and once more he directed his shining orbs towards the window, but beheld her not. She had gone as she had come, unsought, unheralded. And still the mild beams of gentle Luna reflected their placid effulgence over the apartment; still the balmy south wind fanned the brow of the youth, and bore the fragrance of the tropics to his senses, but the woman, the spirit, the vision had vanished, and he was alone.

A short time the youth remained silent, while many strange, undefined and harrowing emotions surged within his breast; then in low tones he mused:

"What can this mean? did I sleep? No, no, it was no vision; I saw her as clearly as I ever saw her. And can it be that a phantom protects me? for she moves not like mortal, and is omnipresent; saves me from the hands of a tyrant in a gambling house! rescues me from the odium of a prison home! and then like a spirit of the air flies in pursuit of

me, and enters my room at night to recall to my mind that she has some kind of an existence! Oh, life, life, most unnatural and supernatural! Oh, heart most tortured by wild and conflicting feelings! What, oh, what will this terrible combination of circumstances terminate in?

And with a long-drawn sigh he sank back upon the pillow, closed his eyes, and in a short time was in an uneasy slumber.

And while he slept, the villain Moran appeared, in natural guise and ferocity, to him in a vision, and so vivid was it that he awoke with several sharp, agonised cries.

Then as his brain was freed from the somnolent mist, and his faculties resumed their proper action he smiled contemptuously at the thought of fear, changed his position, and again courted sleep.

A moment more and hurried footfalls resounded over the stairs; doors clanged, and the next instant Don Santo dashed into the room, his face pale, and his long gray curls flying in wild disorder about his head, while behind him came Inez and Sylvia, holding lights aloft, and trembling with fear.

"Oh, my son, my son!" exclaimed the Don, in tones of alarm, as he bent over the bed, "are you ill? Oh, tell me!"

"Not at all," rejoined the youth, very quietly: "Thank Heaven for that!" ejaculated the Don, fervently. "But what has happened? I cannot bear this suspense. Speak!"

"Oh, tell me, Enrique, why you shrieked so?" added Inez, beseechingly.

"I have not done so to my knowledge," he composedly answered.

The Don started back, pressed his hands to his temples, and gazed with dilated eye at the youth; then, while that terrible fear of dementia again reached his brain, he muttered:

"Oh, my boy, my boy! Alas! alas!" and with anguish renewed, with his short-lived happiness dispelled, he sank upon his knees at the bedside.

At that moment Donna Eulalie entered, looked for an instant at the trembling girl, then at her grief-stricken husband, and cried:

"Santo, Sylvia, Inez! Is Enrique worse? Oh, answer some of you—quick!"

"Do not be excited, dear Donna," replied the youth, "I am very well; but everybody is frightened and without any cause, as far as I know."

"Oh, Inez, Inez!" sobbed Sylvia, "Enrique is losing his mind again! Oh, this is too much!"

"Hush, Sylvia," cautioned Inez. "I don't believe it: I will speak to him."

Anxiously, timidly, Sylvia followed her friend, and watched her with sad interest as she approached the bed.

"Dear Enrique," whispered Inez, soothingly, "what has troubled you? Tell me all, every word, please."

Somewhat irritated by what he esteemed the childish action of the Don, the youth impatiently replied:

"I will explain all when you begin to act like reasonable beings."

Inez turned away, and arousing the Don, whispered to him a cheerful word; then consoling the others as much as was in her power, said:

"Now, Enrique, what has occurred to agitate you?"

"A dream of my former life."

Inez was tempted to laugh; the Don looked perplexed; Sylvia appeared ashamed of her previous apprehension; and Donna Eulalie glanced around the group in wonder.

Suddenly a suspicion flew in upon the Don's mind, and he hastily queried:

"Has anything troubled you, Enrique?"

"Yes."

Inez's face again became serious; Sylvia's fears were again awakened; and Donna Eulalie drew near and gazed into the youth's face with all a mother's solicitude.

For a moment a portentous, foreboding silence prevailed. Then raising himself upon his elbow the youth glanced around the little circle and impressively said:

"I have seen a spirit!"

Again that terror struck the Don's mind and he groaned:

"Oh, my poor, poor Enrique; truly my cup of sorrow is full!"

"Oh, my dear child," gasped Donna Eulalie, "explain those words so wild and strange."

"Heaven grant that he may!" murmured Sylvia, while the tears trickled from her eyes.

The Don, imbued with the faintest hope, moved tremulously forward, and stood regarding the youth with painful longing, while his facial muscles contracted.

Inez, with pale face and compressed lips, awaited the words of her lover, which were either to elevate or depress her perturbed spirit.

The youth gazed from one to the other, and said, in a clear, ringing voice:

"I have seen the Veiled Lady!"

Sylvia's face became suddenly white, and she sank into a chair, breathing heavily.

Don Santo regarded the youth for a moment in mingled fear, wonder, and incredulity: then, while his eyes dilated and a tremor passed over his frame, he ejaculated:

"What! do you tell me true? Have you seen her!—her?"

"I have," whispered the youth, astounded at the Don's apparent knowledge of her.

"Oh, can it be?"

And with these words, uttered in a low plaintive wail, Donna Eulalie sank into a chair, and strained her hands wildly together.

"But what of it? Do you remember? Have you ever seen her? Oh, speak!" articulated the youth, a rush of conflicting thoughts sweeping across his brain.

Inez impressed by the solemnity of the scene and the inexplicable words and evident dread of those around her, stood in the centre of the room, glancing from one to the other in amazement.

Don Santo, who had been struggling valiantly with his emotions, now arose and in as calm a voice as he could command, said:

"Do not be excited, my dear son, there is nothing to fear, but this is a subject—an object—which at first always calls forth feelings of sorrow and terror."

"But why—oh why?" he impatiently interrupted.

"I pray you be quiet," continued the Don, soothingly, "I am afraid this disturbance will make you ill again, and—"

"But the Veiled Lady! I will know of her!" cried the youth, while his eyes blazed.

An expression of apprehension flew to the Don's features, and motioning Inez to him, he anxiously whispered:

"Quiet him—tell him that to-morrow he shall hear the legend of the Veiled Lady."

With her sweet face beaming with love and solicitude Inez approached the bed, stroked his throbbing brow with her lily palm, and gently said:

"Dear Enrique, you will be silent for my sake?"

The magical touch of that beloved hand stilled the tremor in his breast, and allayed the angry pulsation of his fiery heart, and with a faint smile, he returned:

"I will, dear Inez, but oh, I so much desire to hear of that grand yet terrible being who has followed me like a shadow."

"To-morrow you shall know all. Now you will drive her from your mind and try to sleep, will you not?"

"Keep your hand on my brow," he whispered, "and I shall soon slumber—perhaps," he added, mentally.

Those words sent a thrill of joy to her heart, and she stoed gazing upon him like a guardian angel, while a benign smile hovered o'er her features, and in the pleasure of ministering to his comfort she seemed oblivious of all else.

In a few moments the youth's eyes closed, his respiration became easier, and apparently he was enjoying a deep and refreshing sleep.

Inez smoothed his forehead once more, and turned away.

With love and gladness had the Don watched the effect of the girl's ministrations, and now pressing his lips to her brow, he gratefully said:

"Your influence is magical, you dear child. I am almost ready to believe that, through you, his life was saved. At any rate you have helped to restore his memory—do you not agree with me, wife?"

"No—yes—oh I'm very cold," shuddered Donna Eulalie.

"What?" queried the Don, somewhat surprised.

"Are you still thinking of the Veiled Lady?"

"Yes, oh yes," responded the Donna, in a low voice, "I cannot drive her from my mind; her shadowy presence always makes me cold for hours afterwards."

"You should conquer all such feelings," remarked the Don, "her visits, although unpleasant at the time, ought to give us happiness."

"Oh, how can you say so, papa?" asked Sylvia, drawing her shawl closer to her form.

"It is evident," rejoined the Don, "and to illustrate, let us suppose that there was doubt in regard to Enrique being our son. In that case the advent of the Spirit would prove his identity conclusively, for she is not visible to those who are not of our blood."

"We have no need of such evidence," said Donna Eulalie, with an exhibition of repugnance; "and I am happier without it."

"And I too," added Sylvia, very earnestly.

"You are excited both of you, and I do not wonder at it," answered the Don, indulgently. "We will say no more about it; for we may awake Enrique, and another thing, serve to keep ourselves awake, which is not desirable, as we need sleep."

"Sleep!" repeated Sylvia. "Oh, how can we sleep after knowing that that darkest of—I can't

speak the word—has been hovering around the house?"

"Nonsense, child," replied her father, with a reassuring smile. "You must drive such thoughts away. Now go to bed all of you, it's ridiculous to have you shivering round here, frightened at nothing; away with you girls; come wife."

And in playful words (the Don's words generally went to extremes), being anxious to cheer them, the Don hurried them from the room, and after some advice to Sylvia, proceeded to his own apartment in company with Donna Eulalie.

When the sound of their footsteps had died away, when all was again still in the chamber, the youth raised himself partially up, and while his breast rose and fell beneath the tumult of warning emotions which surged within his breast, he ejaculated in a deep, husky voice:

"The Don knows of the Veiled Lady—but how? He says in confidence to his wife—deceiving himself with the idea that I was asleep—the advent of the Spirit would prove his identity conclusively, for she is not visible to those who are not of our blood! Can it be possible then that I am a De Vega? Could the Don have lost me in my childhood, and by some strange antic of his brain conceived it to be in my boyhood instead? No, no, that is foolish, for then Sylvia or Inez would not know me. Oh, if I could tear under the clouds that envelope this mystery! Let me think." He was silent a few moments. "No, no, the words of the Don cannot be true, for now I remember that even the villain Moran saw her in the gambling house, and fell as though dead. But stop, this is refuted by the fact that Dikely was near Moran at the time, and he did not see her. Ah! another thought, will it help me out? Could Moran have been a brother, a cousin, any relative of the De Vegas, and have stolen me away when a child and supplanted another in my place, out of revenge or hatred to the Don? This would account for the Veiled Lady being perceptible to him, and for his desire to keep me in his power. But it cannot be, for I am confident that there is no one who resembles me in person enough to allow such a change. And again, Moran could not belong to the De Vegas. No, no, his nature is too base for that. How then could he see the Veiled Lady? For in spite of all evidence to the contrary, I am convinced that he did see her."

"It is all a terrible puzzle. One conjecture seems to have obtained a basis, when it is hurled aside and a grim fact takes its place. But let me try again. I must know whether those who move around me and in some measure influence my actions are mortal or immortal, and although the remarks seem foolish, yet I am so weary, and at times so excited by the mystic life which is given me, that I am fain to believe that mortals are assisted by those who inhabit the air, and go and come at pleasure—for has not that dark, gloomy woman appeared to me twice before when in danger? and now does she not visit me again? Yes, and another startling coincidence—she came when perplexity or trouble assailed me, no matter where I am! Oh, what does this portend? It thrills me as I think of it."

He paused and for a few moments was silent, during which time varied and disturbing thoughts chased each other through his mind, suggesting every possible, probable, yes, and impossible and improbable contingency, supposition, and hypothesis, which any person driven to desperation by such an impenetrable network of peculiar, adverse, and anomalous circumstances, would grasp at. At length he clenched his hands, and vehemently continued:

"Let me bring all my power of mind to bear on this. The Don speaks advisedly; he is not a man to assert what he does not know. But facts raise two conditions. Either the Don is wrong, or Moran is a De Vega. I may yet probe this. I remember that this morning, when the Don spoke of his early manhood, he paused, and a grieved expression rested upon his face, probably from some sad event that occurred in years past. Could that even, whatever it was, have been in connection with his brother, and that brother have been Moran? If so, remorse was the cause of Moran's terror when he saw this Spirit? Am I right? Is Moran a De Vega? The evidence I have points to this supposition, and the fact that Dikely did not see her, and that Moran and I did, is strong testimony. And that, taken with the facts that none but the De Vegas can see her, would prove that Moran is a De Vega, and I also. Have I found a name after so long a time? No, for I cannot be allied to Moran; the blood that flows in these veins cannot be the same that circles round the heart of that demon! I pray Heaven, it is not! No, for I remember now that Samuel Wilton and the judge saw the Veiled Lady in the court-room! I am saved one pain, but I am in the dark again. I am lost in a whirlpool of thought, struggling, contending thought, that battles for a revelation, but is defeated by destiny! Oh, destiny, destiny, most inexplicable and harassing, most charming yet delu-

sive, when wilt thou satisfy and give me rest, sweet rest, when my brain shall be tranquil and my heart happy? Will that day ever come? But one must come before it, one that will either engender new sadness and perplexity, or give me the key to this inexplicable existence—and that to-morrow. Then will the legend—for, by the words of the Don, this beautiful being is a disembodied spirit—of the Veiled Lady be repeated to me, and I can gain information—but how? I must be mad, for spirits commune not with men!"

(To be continued.)

BLEACHING POWDER.

THE following is the method of manufacturing bleaching powder:—

The lime used for the preparation of this article must be of the first quality, for unless this is attended to the salt prepared from it will be very inferior in colour. To prepare the lime for the absorption of the chlorine gas it is brought to the screening department and slaked with just sufficient water as will cause the lime to crumble into a very fine powder; some care must be taken that not too much water is used, or it will be difficult to screen it. The powdered lime is then screened or sifted through fine wire gauze sieves, having about 400 apertures per square inch.

The next step to be considered is the preparation of the chlorine gas. This is obtained by acting upon peroxide of manganese with hydrochloric or muriatic acid. The stills used for generating this gas are formed of large stone slabs, grooved and well cemented together, and in the form of a cistern; this is again surrounded by a casing of fire-bricks, iron, or stone slabs similar to the others. A cavity of about 6 in. must be left all round between the two; this serves as a steam chamber, and is used to heat the contents of the still. The size of the still outside, including the steam chamber, may be about 9 ft. square and about 4 ft. deep. Inside of the still, and supported on pillars about 1 ft. above the bottom, is another slab called a table; on this table is placed the manganese which is to furnish the chlorine gas. From the stills the gas is conveyed to the chamber through earthenware pipes; the joints of these pipes are connected together by water lutes, so that no gas can escape. Various apertures are required in the top of the stills, a large one in the centre for charging the still; other small ones for running in the acid, and another at one of the sides and at the bottom for running off the waste acid before recharging. This last is a round hole, and is stopped with a wooden plug.

The chamber is formed of lead, supported by a framework of wood, similar to a vitriol chamber. The chamber has two doors, which are luted close during the time the charge is in. The bottom of the chambers are formed of fire-bricks. The size of the chamber and number of stills must be according to the quantity of bleaching powder to be made; the height of the chamber must be about 6 ft.

Having now briefly described the apparatus and the use of them, we will proceed with the manufacturing process. The first step consists in charging the chamber with the powdered lime to a uniform depth of from 4 in. to 6 in.; after this is done the doors are closed and luted, and it is then ready for receiving the gas. The stills are now to be charged by placing the manganese on the table in the interior; the muriatic acid is run in until it reaches about 3 in. or so above the manganese. The covers must now be placed over the openings and securely luted with clay; steam is then turned into the intermediate space so as to heat the contents. In a short time the gas begins to evolve, and passes through the pipes into the chamber.

The charges are usually worked off in a period of twenty-four hours, after which the stills are emptied of their contents, and another charge of manganese placed in. During the time that elapses in emptying and recharging the stills the lime in the chamber is stirred about, so as to expose a fresh surface to the influence of the gas. It is usually performed by the men, who go inside and stir the contents with short rakes, until it is completely mixed together. The surface of the lime is left in furrows caused by the teeth of the rake. When this is done the doors are closed and made secure from the escape of gas, acid is again run on to the manganese as before, and steam turned in as previously mentioned. The lime is left in the chamber until it is sufficiently impregnated with the chlorine gas, that is, until it contains from 36 to 37 per cent. of chlorine. The time occupied in doing this depends on, first the quantity of lime placed in the chamber because the thinner the layer of lime is the sooner it will be complete; and, secondly, the quantity of gas passed into the chamber, but perhaps four days may be the average time in preparing it. When thoroughly impregnated, and if the still is not worked off, the gas from it is turned into another

chamber, the chamber doors are then opened, and, as soon as it was convenient to enter, the lime is packed in casks.

FACETIE.

A MAN may be ever so poor, he may be ever so unfortunate, but he need never be hard up for candles so long as he makes light of his sufferings.

WHEN a good wife had prepared an excellent dinner for her husband, and he declared he was pleased with it, she said: "Well, kiss me, then." "Oh, never mind that, my dear," was his reply; "the necessities of life we must have, but the luxuries we can dispense with."

THE principal occupation of the "girl of the period" is said to be to sit at the window and watch for the "coming man."

A CERTAIN landlady, it is said, makes her pious light that her lodgers can see to go to bed without a candle, after eating a moderate-sized piece.

"I HAVE just met your old acquaintance, Daley," said an Irishman to his friend, "and was sorry to see he had almost slipped away to nothing. You are thin, and I am thin, but he is thinner than both of us put together."

A COUNTRYMAN, who attended a race, said he didn't see why the sportsman should be so particular to a quarter of a second about the end of it, when they kept the public waiting half-an-hour for the beginning.

DICTUM ANTE.

"BILL," said a respectable, but pensive burglar to another, "get rid of them sovereigns we found." (He was not vulgar enough to call them "sovs," like a snob.) "You know, I hear old Gopus had marked the money in his till."

"All right," said his friend, exhibiting bank-paper, "I go by the good rule, 'When found, make a note of.'"
—Punch.

VERY UNGALLANT!

Groom on Cob: "Going out of town soon, Jim?" Jim: "Well, I hope so. Me and my 'asses is 'most wore out with this 'ere park 'acking, and lady's mile-in! I wish they'd make a railway on it!"
—Punch.

WANTED A PILLORY.—A paragraph headed "Tradesmen's Frauds" appeared the other day, in the *Islington Gazette*, stating that at the Islington Petty Sessions in the previous week, ninety-one shopkeepers were convicted of using illegal weights and measures. The different trades in which these rogues cheated, and the number of rogues who discredited each trade, are very carefully specified by our Islington contemporary; but these statistics are rendered useless by the omission of the rogues' names. An Act of Parliament should provide that the names and addresses of all such rogues shall be duly advertised.
—Punch.

"HAY, ETC."

"WANTED, a Curate for the * * * Parish Church; stipend, first year, 140*l*.; second year, 120*l*.; to undertake the whole duty when the rector is away, about nine months in the year, and to superintend the making of the rector's hay, &c. Apply to the Rev. &c."

Why the unfortunate curate is to have 20*l*. less for the second year than for the first, we don't know. It is a reversal of the usual course of reward. Is he expected to make all his flock so good the first year, that they will want but little looking after subsequently? But that's a trifle. As to the making of the Rector's Hay, "et cetera," we think the advertiser should be more explicit. What else is the curate to make—ten, sermons, beds, bread, or what? We have read of "the et cetera oath," which was regarded as a snare—we daresay that no snare is meant here, but business is business. Some curates are handy and willing, some are awkward and haughty—for his own sake the advertiser should say how much he expects, in addition to the discharge of a clergyman's real duty, on a decreasing salary.
—Punch.

GOOD STEP.—A correspondent writes to say that he is desirous of ascertaining whether he may place any reliance on the revelations of a certain spiritual medium. We should think not:—there's more of the duster than the necromancer about him.
—Fun.

SPORTING MEMS.

A correspondent wants to run a bill with anyone for fifty pounds a side. Stakes to be held by him.

A spirited dairyman will back his milk-walk against any other of the same weight and age. The race to be done in pumps, chalked.

A novice, who stated the other day he'd fight anybody at catch weight, writes to say you won't catch him waiting any longer.
—Fun.

A GENUINE BLACK DIAMOND.—Politicians may differ on the question as to whether coal is, or is not, "contraband of war"—none will be found to gainsay the fact that the honoured name of Scrooge gave rise to far different thoughts in the days of the Crimean War.
—Fun.

OLIVE OIL.—The oil made in the district of Oneglia is better than that of Southern Italy, and large quantities are refined before being exported. The process of refining the oil is very simple. Large shallow tin boxes are made with small holes pierced in the bottom; this is then covered with a thin sheet of wadding. Four, five, or more of these boxes are placed on frames one over the other, and the oil being poured into the top box, is allowed to soak through the wadding and drop into the next box, and so on until it gets into the last, when it runs off into the tanks. The wadding absorbs all the thick particles contained in the oil when it comes from the mills, and leaves it perfectly clear and tasteless. The oil thus refined is almost exclusively exported to Nice, where it is put in bottles, and sent all over the world as "Huile de Nice." Olive oil is all sold by weight. The total quantity exported from Oneglia, in 1868, was 6,162,400 kilos. (131,822 cwt.); of these, 257,610 kilos, were shipped direct to England; 5,855,692 kilos, to France; and 39,288 kilos, to Genoa.

OLD-FASHIONED FLOWERS.

WHERE are the sweet old-fashioned posies,
Quaint in form and bright in hue,
Such as grandma gave her lovers,
When she walked the garden through?

Lavender, with spikes of azure
Pointing to the dome on high,
Telling thus whence came its colour,
Thanking with its breath the sky.

Four o'clock, with heart upfolding,
When the loving sun had gone,
Streak and stain of cunning crimson
Like the light of early dawn.

Regal lilies, many-petalled,
Like the curling drifts of snow,
With their crown of golden anthers
Poised on malachite below.

Morning glories, tints of purple,
Stretched on tents of creamy white,
Folding up their satin curtains
Inward through the dewy night.

Marigold, with coat of velvet
Streaked with gold and yellow lace,
With its love for summer sunlight
Written on its honest face.

Dainty pink with feathered petals,
Tinted, curled, and deeply frayed,
With its calyx heart half broken,
On its leaves uplifted laid.

Can't you see them in the garden
Now, where grandma takes her nap,
And cherry blooms shake softly over
Silver hair and snowy cap?

Will the modern florist's triumph
Look so fair or small so sweet,
As these dear old-fashioned posies,
Blooming round our grandame's feet?

E. L.

GEMS.

NONE so little enjoy life, and are such burdens to themselves, as those who have nothing to do.

The flattery of others would not injure us, if we did not flatter ourselves.

Even life that is not as we wish it, need not be fruitless of good; and if not fruitless of good, it is not without happiness.

CHEERFULNESS is a matter which depends fully as much on the state of things within, as on the state of things without and around us.

If you wish to know a man's character, wait till some disgrace or misfortune happens to him, and you will soon see either all his greatness, or all his weakness.

LET us never meddle with strife if we can help it, and let us have as little to do as we can with the angry and the furious; but let us always stand by the right, and let our silence, if not words, rebuke all wrong-doers.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO SOFTEN KID BOOTS.—Melt four ounces of tallow, then pour it in a jar and add to it the same weight of cod or olive oil, stir and let it stand till cold—apply a small quantity occasionally with a piece of flannel. Should the boots be very dirty, cleanse with warm water. Will soften any kind of leather.

OIL OF MUSTARD IN RHEUMATISM.—Where one-third of the male population complain to some extent of rheumatic pains, in the fickle climate of

England, more especially along the sea-shore, physicians have it in their power to mitigate an immense amount of severe suffering by prescribing the volatile oil of mustard. It is employed as a rubefacient, being first diluted in its own weight of alcohol at forty degrees. Some patients may object to its pungent odour; but this is temporary, while the remedy may in some cases prove a permanent cure. Make the application at least twice a day, and protect the part with soft flannel. Were it not for detecting it by its pungent odour, this oil would have become a secret remedy for rheumatic pains years ago.

CREAM CAKES.—For the crust take three quarters of a pound of flour, half a pound of butter, one pint of water, and ten eggs. Boil the water and butter together, stir in the flour while it is boiling, and then let it cool. When cold, add the eggs, well beaten. To make the custard, use one pint of milk, four eggs, two cups of sugar, and half a cup of flour. Boil the milk, and while it is boiling add the sugar, eggs, and flour, and flavour it with lemon. Drop the crust on tins, and bake them in a quick oven over fifteen or twenty minutes. When they are done, open them at the sides, and put in as much custard as possible. It is a great improvement to the appearance of the crust to rub it over with the white of an egg before it is baked.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE following Bavarian princes are named as taking part in the campaign—Otho, brother to the King, Luitpold, uncle to the King, with his sons Louis, Leopold, and Arnold; and Duke Emmanuel, brother to the Empress of Austria.

THE service of chaplains for the army of the Rhine is composed of 19 Catholics, 9 Protestants, and 3 Jews.

THE Grand Duke of Baden has sent his children to their aunt at Gotha, where they will shortly be followed by their mother, the Grand Duchess.

"LABELLED FOR DEATH!"—Slips of parchment, like luggage labels, have been prepared, on which the name of each German soldier is plainly written; and one of these will be fastened inside his coat when he goes into action. After the day is decided, the enemy, if he be the master of the field, will be requested to collect and return these labels, of which about a million have been provided.

TURNPIKE TRUSTS.—A preliminary return shows that in England and North Wales there are 107 turnpike trusts free from bonded debt; in 83, with a toll income of 73,237*l*. in 1868, the local Act has expired; in 24, with a toll income of 46,485*l*., the local Act has not expired. There are 781 turnpike trusts not free from debt; in 456 with a toll income in 1868 or 372,105*l*. and a bonded debt of 1,439,682*l*., the local Act has expired; in 325, with a toll income of 310,153*l*. and a bonded debt of 1,674,185*l*., the local Act has not expired.

DEATH OF A GIANT.—Francis Sheridan, the landlord of the Irish Harp Tavern, Baker Street, Hawick, and well known in the district for his large size, died on the 5th inst. at the age of 30. "Big Frank," as he was called, was 7ft. 5in. in height, measured 58 inches round the chest, and weighed 22 stones avoirdupois. He was a native of Ireland.

RECRUITING is now proceeding in London with greater activity than at any time since the war with Russia. The same activity also continues to prevail in the British naval and military establishments. A War Office circular has been issued, impressing upon every soldier the importance of making his will in the regulation form, and of keeping it in his pocket ledger.

FATAL ALPINE ACCIDENT.—We hear that a Mrs. George Marko fell, a few days ago, into a crevasse in the mountains near Chamouni, and that up to the last time her relatives in England had heard (about 24 hours after the occurrence) she had not been found. The young lady was the daughter of the Rev. R. C. Mau, of Rickinghall, Suffolk. She was with her husband spending their honeymoon in Switzerland. Her husband is Mr. George Marko, the son of the late Sadley Bastard Marko, of Liskeard, in Cornwall. They were married about two months ago. The accident is supposed to have occurred on the Mer de Glace, or at some of the glaciers near.

STAMP DUTY ON LEASES.—An Act of Parliament has just been printed to declare the stamp duty chargeable on certain leases. The law has been altered in consequence of a decision in the Court of Exchequer. It is provided that no lease already made or hereafter to be made for any consideration in respect whereof it is chargeable with ad valorem stamp duty, and in further consideration either of a covenant by the lessee to make, or of his having previously made, any substantial improvement of, or addition to, the property demised to him, or of any usual covenant, shall be deemed to be, or to have been, chargeable with any stamp duty in respect of such further consideration.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

DINAH LEVI.—Such a marriage is illegal.
HOUSEHOLD.—Use emery and oil sparingly and judiciously; polish with soft wash-leather.

M. A. M.—The omission was accidental. The tale was duly resumed in the next number.

AN INVALID should apply to a chemist for a little alterative medicine.

HENRICUS B.—We are not acquainted with the gentleman. Your handwriting is very plain.

H. HAYDON will find full information about dressing skins in No. 339 of our journal.

EMMA.—Andante, in music, signifies that the movement should be played tolerably slow.

M. R. M.—The monthly parts referred to will be forwarded, post free, on receipt of postage stamps value 3s. 6d.

NESTOR.—Pius IX. is in the seventy-eighth year of his age, and is the 322nd Pope of Rome. He was elected to the Papacy in June, 1846, after the death of Gregory XVI.

SARID CHARLES.—Your handwriting is not altogether unsuitable for the employment in question. It however requires improvement, being deficient in neatness. The orthography is faulty.

O. P.—One remedy for the peculiarity by which you are characterised, is to think less about it; others are cheerful companionship and outdoor athletic sports, such as cricket and boating.

TRAVELLER.—During the last few years the passport system has been virtually abolished in France. A notification, however, was recently issued, that during the present war foreign travellers entering French territory will require to be furnished with passports.

PAMEY.—We cannot recommend you anything to remove the superfluous hair, beyond the free use of the tweezers. For the freckles use as a lotion some lemon-juice, in which a little powdered borax and sugar have been dissolved.

Q. E. D.—Marshal Oudinot is the name of the French general who commanded the troops by whose success the authority of the Pope was re-established at Rome in 1849. The French troops have occupied that city since 1849 until the recent evacuation.

A SKEEK.—The teeth should be "stopped" by a dentist. The handwriting is excellent, and admirably suited for the proposed employment. The omission you are kind enough to call attention to was accidental and has been remedied.

L. T. F. E.—There are differences of opinion even amongst grammarians. Some would form the plural of the word convolvulus by adding *s* to the singular; others would accomplish the same object by changing the final *s* into *i*.

HENRY.—Your position and means appear to entitle you to set about founding a home for yourself without delay. We should recommend you to fall in love with some young lady as soon as you can, to win her heart, and marry her.

G. H. G.—The voice requires feeding; that is to say, the tone of your health requires to be raised by strengthening diet and regimen. For the hands, use at night glycerine, rose-water, and lemon-juice combined. The handwriting will do as it is.

INCognito.—Your handwriting is good enough. In our opinion the money of which you are in search is one of those will-o'-the-wisps that will never be caught. Your description of the claim is about as definite as the recollection of a dream.

A BROKEN-HEARTED WIFE.—You must summon to your aid yet a little more patience, and endure for a while your hard lot. Should the Married Woman's Property Bill pass into law you will thereby have a remedy against most of your grievances.

B. Q. (Dublin).—We are unable to understand your communication. If you will kindly explain to us a little more in detail the object or the effect you wish to produce, we will endeavour to furnish you with the necessary particulars.

ROSEBUD.—The best advice we can give you is to allow Dame Nature in this instance to have her way. If, however, you will try to assume an appearance contrary to that with which she would endow you, omit from your specific the spirit of wine. We are informed that this is injurious under the circumstances.

M. O.—The archbishop can grant a special license, which is very expensive, to marry at any convenient time or place. With this exception marriage in England cannot take place in a private house, but must be celebrated in a church.

brated with open doors between eight and twelve in the forenoon, in a church, or in a licensed chapel or building, or in the registrar's office.

INA.—All hypothetical questions are difficult to answer and especially such as are connected with love. When you give your heart away you will, we expect, think very little of the nationality of him who wins it. You will see in your individual love something which will absorb you, and cause you to ignore the speculations of philosophers as to the diversified characters of the various races of mankind. To satisfy your curiosity, however, we may add, that it is generally considered that a Frenchman surpasses all other men in what is termed the gallantry of love, while a German is perhaps the most poetical lover. The Germans' love is deep and constant, so is an Englishman's, and practical also. Both of the latter are somewhat undemonstrative.

E. L. D.—As far as we can judge from your particulars you would not be successful. A wife cannot obtain a divorce on the ground of the husband's adultery alone. You might apply for a judicial separation, with alimony, but should be well advised before you take any steps in the matter. The case you mention is not apposite, because the Scottish law of divorce differs from the English law on the same subject.

WM. C. (Belfast).—You should try to learn that poetry does not consist in the mere setting down a string of words, to be followed by another in such a way that the last syllable of each line approaches to what is called rhyme. The contribution you have sent is nothing more than this. It contains scarcely more than one idea, reiterated again and again, but after all so dreamily conveyed that your precise meaning is unintelligible.

SUMMER FASHIONS.

Ah, deary me! one's poor head whirls,

While pacing through the city,

And gazing on the hosts of girls,

So lively and so pretty!

Embroidiments of all that's gay—

Of poetry and passion:

So beautiful, and yet, strange fact,

Such willing slaves of fashion!

One sees, that takes the pains to look,

Such attitudes and poses—

Such slender forms, beneath their loads

Of artificial roses!

And though the chignon's coming down—

Which seems to please the people—

We find the hat's most favoured crown

Soars upwards, a *fa stoopie*!

With much diminished crinoline,

And sunshades like umbrellas,

They mingle along, through shade and shine,

On high-heeled French propellers!

And now, as in the olden time,

When fair ones shone resplendent,

Jewels of value, more or less,

On neck and arms hang pendant!

Oh, summer fair! oh, summer sweet!

We fear some wiles and lasses

Love fashion's follies better far

Than all thy flowers and grasses—

Thou all thy shady, dewy groves,

Thy balmy, hidden treasures—

Gay butterflies, that sip and sip

From life's mistaken pleasures! M. A. K.

A YOUNG ANGLES.—Paste can be used as a bait for chub, carp, and bream in September and during the winter months. Make it up to the size of a large pea. We subjoin a recipe: Moisten a large spoonful of flour with the white of an egg and work it into dough with your hands. Add a little honey and a little butter. To make the paste tenacious, knead some cotton wool into the other ingredients. The paste can be coloured red with vermilion or yellow with turmeric.

T. T. P.—If the conduct is such as to disturb the assembly, the beadle, or other official present, should turn the offender out. In the event of the beadle being used for the quasi-assault he would have a good defence by pleading, that in the exercise of his office he laid hands upon the plaintiff to prevent his disturbing the congregation by indecent behaviour during the performance of divine service. The amount of force used should be as small as possible.

S. K. C. (Dublin).—Though there are considerable merits about the poem, we must nevertheless say that the imagery is defective. We cannot see how Mercy can be the child of Peace; nor can we understand how it came about that Mercy could weep for a lover at the shrine of his lost mistress. Such an office would seem rather to belong to Pity, who might have been an ambassador from Mercy to pave the way for Peace. It may be objected that logical sequence should not be expected in poetry. There is some force in the objection, but yet a true poem must be able to bear a test of this description.

WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE.—A person under age is civilly liable for a wrong not connected with a breach of contract. The plea of infancy at which you hint would, therefore, be unavailable. You could sue for the damage in the County Court, but if the judge should consider that your own act or neglect brought about the accident complained of, his decision would be against you; and from your narrative, it would seem that you voluntarily exposed yourself to danger. This is the weak part of your case, and the part which requires thought and care if you take further proceedings.

ALEXANDER.—All your questions must be answered in the negative. Upon a separation between husband and wife, the latter has no right to the custody of the children, nor even any right to see them unless an agreement be made to that effect. Of course, if she contrives to see them, or if they run away from the father to her, she incurs no penalty. Having voluntarily claimed the children, the father incurs a high moral responsibility to maintain them in a proper way, but there is no means of compelling him to support them unless they were placed in the workhouse, when the parish authorities would interfere.

JANE.—It is as unwise to fly from troubles as it is to anticipate them. They should be patiently borne; both despair and recklessness being studiously avoided. The greatest relief will be found in the performance of the daily duties which present themselves to you. If you pursue this course you will have the satisfaction of feeling that you are doing right, and will be entitled to hope for brighter times. The recollection of a simple proverb sometimes gives repose to the mind. Here is one for you:

Beware of desperate steps—the darkest day,
Ere 'till to-morrow, will have passed away,
But keep on working and trying, don't be idle and don't despair.

FLORENCE.—There is very little reason in love, so little that we are somewhat surprised that you should ask us to choose your husband for you from the two suitors who have each proposed for your hand. Of course you will have the one whom you like the best, notwithstanding your instinct assures you that his love for you is less than that of the one who does not hold so high a place in your estimation. But although we know that a woman will choose the man whom she likes best in preference to the one who likes her best, we do not agree that her choice is well made. The great necessity of a woman's nature is to be loved, and therefore when she discards the earnest devotion of a true lover for some advantage of appearance and position without love, we submit, with due deference, that she errs. Having intimated our opinion, our advice is probably not required.

MAUDE EDITH V., nineteen, fair complexion, medium height. Respondent must be poor, with good education. **GRACE DARLING,** twenty-one, dark, under the middle height, well educated, loving, and acquainted with all domestic duties. Respondent should be steady, some years her senior, and reside in Birmingham.

OSMUND, nineteen, 5ft. 7in., fair, good looking, affectionate, with good prospects. Respondent must be dark, good looking, fond of music, and send her cards.

LILY, medium height, brown hair and eyes, pretty, ladylike, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall and a gentleman.

A. J. B., twenty-one, 5ft. 10in., fair complexion, dark hair, fond of home and music, and in good circumstances. Respondent must be amiable and affectionate.

J. A. H., 5ft. 11in., dark hair and eyes, fond of home and home comforts, and in a good situation. Respondent must be affectionate, tall, and dark.

FLYING JIN SHEET, twenty, 5ft. 7in., hazel eyes, brown hair, good disposition, and fond of home. Respondent must love a sailor from the bottom of her heart.

TOPSAIL SHEET BLOCKS (Seaman, R.N.), 5ft. 6in., black hair, brown eyes, good tempered, a teetotaler, fond of home and children.

STONEY HAMILTON, thirty, tall, dark hair, gray eyes, long beard, and employed in a Government office. Respondent must be about twenty, well educated, affectionately disposed, good looking, have light hair, and be moderately good housekeeper.

LILLY WHITE, seventeen, dark, pretty, fair skin, blue eyes, brown hair, musical, fond of home, and loving. Respondent must be about nineteen or twenty, tall, handsome, and affectionate.

A. A., twenty-three, tall, dark, handsome, and receiving an income of 350*l.* per annum. Respondent must be of good family, tall, good looking, and with a small income.

PAUL JONES, thirty, tall, dark complexion, black whiskers, in business for himself, making about 300*l.* a year. Respondent must be under twenty-five, very fair, ladylike, affectionate, domesticated, with a private income, or good sound expectations.

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ROB ROY wishes to communicate with "Emmy."

A KENTISH MAN wishes to communicate with "Kathleen Macroun."

F. H. R. is requested by "Zilla," to forward his *carte* and make an appointment.

WILLIAM AND JAMES wish for the address of "Lizzie M." and "Emily R."

MUSICAL ALF. AND POLLY.—The receipt of further communications is acknowledged.

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IF "J. S." wishes to hear from "Minnie" he must write first and send his address.

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KATIE wishes to receive the *carte*, also the address of "Harry A."

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- MUSIC.—1. Wake, Lady, Wake! Serenade, composed by R. Guyloft. 2. The Royal Flower Show; Waltz, composed by E. S. Grenville. 3. To Sing of thy Beauty, dear Maid; Ballad, composed by T. G. Welshford. 4. Twilight; Polka, composed by Frank Lloyd. 5.—Row Gently Here! Barcarolle, composed by Raymond Gaillati. [334, STRAND.]

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